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THE

CABINET MINISTER.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
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THE

CABINET MINISTER.

BY THE AUTHORESS OF

"MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS," "MRS. ARMYTAGE,"
"THE HEIR OF SELWOOD," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
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THE

CABINET MINISTER.

CHAPTER I.

Princes are naturally lovers of low company. They are apt rather to hate than love the nobility, on account of the occasional resistance to their will which will be made by their virtue, their petulance, or their pride.

BURKE.

THE influence enjoyed at this period by Sheridan over the mind of the Prince, though great beyond his favour at any previous period, belonged neither to the wit, the poet, nor the orator, but to the man of expedients. The unfortunate manager and scarcely more fortunate politician was himself bewildered by embarrassments, the origin of a petty system of policy which he was willing to make the

law of others, as recklessness (which he called necessity) had rendered it his own.

Those who bask in the sunshine and prosperities of life are little aware of the foul and bewildering exhalations which emanate from the Slough of Despond. The right-minded and right-hearted give way at once, and submit to be asphyxiated rather than contend with such noisome vapours; but those whose hearts are harder, and whose wit sharper than their sense of integrity, too often prefer the diseased existence generated by malaria, and grow indifferent to the defeatures and deformity disfiguring their moral aspect.

Conscious of the forfeiture of public respect, the brightest intellectual of the times, after having dragged down his high renown to the vulgar level, cared little whom he involved in disrepute. Perplexed by duns, and aware that the security of his latter days depended upon his accession to place, the sparkling genius of Sheridan was now exhausted by attempts to

enliven the *ennui* of a royal circle; while his sagacious foresight disgraced itself by the concoction of intrigues for his own establishment in power at the expense of his party and his principles.

Meanwhile, the result only was apparent. Never was the coterie of Carlton House more brilliant than during the six months preceding the Regency. Young Grenfell, to whom the scene with all its accessories of luxury and enjoyment was new, might fairly be pardoned the infatuation with which he resigned himself to the charm.

The Prince of Wales, at the sober age of fifty, had reached that second epoch of elegant frivolity whose sensualities consist in security from change or disturbance. In earlier youth, the selfishness encrusted by a defective education on a naturally kind and amiable disposition had demonstrated itself in a directly contrary extreme. Excitement, whether produced by excess or novelty, must at any cost

of money or reputation gratify the passions of youth and intemperance. Backed by such lawless companions as a Lord Barrymore or a Duc de Chartres, it was easy to fling down the barriers of good sense and decency; and His Royal Highness's present associates were equally ready and equally ingenious in smoothing the rumpling of the rose-leaf, and securing the indolent but sensitive Prince from the approach of clamorous tradesmen or the sarcasms of disappointed adherents.

Whatever discontents were excited by the embarrassments of the Prince, they were allowed to reach no further than the gorgeous vestibule of Carlton House: or if unpunctual service became the result of unpunctual payment, new tradesmen and new servants were silently provided, and tutored and broken-in to accomplish without fault or murmur the whimsical behests of the Sardanapalus of Pall Mall. The swiftest horses, the easiest carriage, were in attendance at a given second to

escort him to a house where the distinction of his friendship was requited by a submissiveness of consideration which might have appeared servile, but that it was tempered by the most polished graces of high-breeding; while the home-intervals of the most undomestic domestic life in the kingdom were soothed by the truly epicurean enjoyment of the best table, best music, and best conversation to be had for love or money.

It was when these adjuncts came at length to be wanting, that the real mischief arose. It was found easier to dispense with old friends and ancient honour, than with French cooks, Italian singers, English jockeys, or the men of wit and fashion who participated in the pleasures of their providing; and society saw with regret not only that "the first gentleman of the age" was likely to rank low among its princes, but that a distressed prince may come to rank low among gentlemen.

Of the distresses of the Prince of Wales,

however, Frank Grenfell saw nothing, and had heard no more than of those of fifty noblemen revelling in excess, though said to be embarrassed on incomes of fifty thousand per annum. Unadmitted to the sober chamber-councils of Adam, M'Mahon, and Bloomfield, he saw only banquets which Apicius might have envied, and a display of trivial magnificence in the costly toys and inventions of the day, which seemed to render the life of the Prince and his satellites a glittering holiday, without purpose and without morrow.

But was Grenfell's the age to look for purpose, or dream of a morrow?—Unaware how blindly he was preparing to pursue, on higher ground and with more illustrious competitors, the race of ruin run by his father, he accepted with joyful gratitude the patronage of Sheridan and the notice of the Prince. The grace of his person and manners was instantly appreciated by his royal protector; and the elegance and playfulness of his conversation sought as a

relief from the ponderous political argumentations on the affairs of the Continent, whose contagion seemed diffused from parliament to society. The slightness of his scholarship was not likely to be detected among the superficial wits whom the Prince, as prince, delighted to honour; while the peculiar bent of his genius and reading, and his familiarity with the light French literature that assimilated so well with the sparkling polish of his conversation, made him peculiarly acceptable to one whose personal knowledge afforded a key and commentary to political memoirs and historical portraits.

Had Grenfell projected a return to his professional pursuits at the close of the season, the attempt would now have become impossible. Through life, the *engouements* of the Prince were as rapid of growth as sudden of extinction; and from the moment a new acquaintance was so fortunate as to please, — whether from his musical or conversational endowments,

— his taste in the fine arts or the course, — *virtù*, gastronomy, or the cutting of a coat, — his rise in favour was as that of Carr with James the First. Before the close of the summer, his Royal Highness liked no day to pass without receiving the respects of young Grenfell, who recounted the *on dits* of the town for his amusement with such sprightly but well-bred originality; and, by supplying point to the flat inane diffuseness of princely discourse, helped on the lagging hours which an over-tasked constitution found laborious. Sheridan, with his load of personal cares, was no longer at leisure for such efforts; but Grenfell, light as a bird, buoyant with youth, happiness, and love, brought sunshine even into the gilded saloons of the " witless Falstaff and his hoary Hal."

His sister could not find it in her heart to tame down, by her warnings, the cheerfulness of spirit with which Frank lent the powers of his fresh and uncontaminated mind to spi-

ritualize the banquets of Carlton House. The dangers by which he was now environed were of a pitch beyond her anticipations and comprehension. She was assured by everybody that her brother's fortune was made; that he was on the high-road to preferment; that the Prince was sure to take care of his favourite, and that the age and infirmities of the King were not likely to afford him leisure to wear out his favour.

Lady Mary, indeed, when congratulated upon the prospects of her nephew, still continued to shrug her shoulders. In common with the rest of the Maclaren family, and hosts of the middle class (of intellect), she continued to worship the jog-trot reign of King George and Queen Charlotte, and to salute his Majesty with the Orientalism of "O King, live for ever!" To them, Windsor Castle, as it stood and was inhabited, appeared immutable, and the Tories of eternal ascendancy; and, after calculating the prospects of Ministers and of the Hursley

peerage, she pronounced "her son's recusancy to be the act of a madman, and Frank's exchange of legs of mutton in the Temple for thighs of woodcocks at Carlton House the act of a fool!"

Nevertheless, there was something so much less degrading in Frank Grenfell's defalcation in favour of the heir-apparent, than in her son's in favour of either the Beckfords, the Barouche Club, or the Cyder Cellar, that she continued to receive her nephew with cordiality; reserving her whinings over her backslidings for the sympathy of her twaddling dowager coterie.

CHAPTER II.

Tucca.—He shall never put thee to thy mathematics, metaphysics, philosophy, and I know not what supposed sufficiencies. If thou hast but the patience to plod enough, talk enough, make noise enough, and be impudent enough,—'tis enough!

BEN JONSON'S POETASTER.

AT the close of the last century, when parliament legislated for the nation collectively and not individually, and the march of public business was unobstructed by the multitude of private bills, or other mud now clinging to the wheels of the state, summer was the season for the country, and winter for the town. Short sessions and long holidays enabled the world to eat its own strawberries, and make its own hay, under shelter of its own oaks;

and dire was the distress of all who were unable to testify their respect to themselves and Frogmore by having post-horses at their door on the 5th of June,—the day succeeding the birth-day.

By degrees, however, the influence of the homely court declined. The domestic observances of Windsor were broken up from the period the King's sons came to mingle in the pleasures and follies of the less strait-laced circles of fashionable life, till at length even Ministers and their subservient houses felt that it was no longer necessary for the great operations of the state to be deferred, in compliment to the attraction of syllabubs and cream. It was admitted that the troublesome operations of the upstart Emperor of the French might sometimes render it necessary to prolong the session till the dog-days; and that henceforward the Treasury Bench must limit its midsummer delights to white-bait dinners at Blackwall. The villas of Roehampton and

Putney rose cent. per cent. in value at the prospect!

In 1810, however,—the last year of sovereignty allotted to the afflicted King, — the longest day of summer proved the welcomest to feverish senators, and to the mob burning to evince its hatred of the House of Commons by tokens of enthusiasm for its libeller. On the 21st of June, parliament was released from its duties, and Sir Francis Burdett from the Tower; and, within a week afterwards, town was deserted by the class of families called respectable, and the professionals and tradesmen their respectability, *i. e.* their money, serves to maintain. The three-score and ten watering-places of the British coast, which owe their existence to the summer emigrations of the latter, became suddenly overflowing; while the former repaired to their parks and lodges, to enjoy the more aristocratic enhancements of rural life.

Still, about the clubs, (those marts of social

fellowship created by the departure from town of the "respectable" families, as completely as Brighton and Margate by that of the cits,) there lingered the chosen caste of dandies who pronounce London as the most charming place in the world nine months of the year, and better than any other the remaining three. The Prince was apt to loiter at Carlton House long after St. James's and Buckingham House were deserted; the Duke of York's visits from Oatlands were of daily occurrence; and till the 12th of August,—the signal for grouse-shooting and lighting up Prince's feathers over shop-fronts in honour of the heir-apparent,—the neighbourhood of White's, Boodle's, and Brookes's, displayed the same sprinkling of fashion as at this present writing. The dandy tribe, with Brummel at its head, was then in its perihelion; a tribe necessarily attached to the metropolis, where alone the sciences of the toilet-table and gaming-table are cultivated with any degree of proficiency.

Still dazzled by the false lights and novel enjoyments of his new modes of life, Grenfell was astonished by the heavy listlessness of these, his companions, when off duty at Carlton House. Their noon-day aspect was of course still unknown to him; but when, sauntering forth late in the afternoon in all the resplendence of dandy costume, exact to the turning of a hair or dismissal of a speck of dust, they paraded their peevish existence in the club-room, he noted with wonder how flat the lees of the champagne, so sparkling the preceding night! He beheld men of talent —(for in that dandy clique many a strong mind was suffered to froth itself to waste) disabled by excess even for their own selfish enjoyments, — bloated, *blasé*, fretful, inconsistent,—all that, ten years afterwards, assigned a nervous recluse to the Pavilion and the Royal Cottage.

"They want a purpose in life," was his comment upon their discontents. "A good

wholesome ambition would have preserved many of them from the hazard-table and curaçoa; and rendered them less burdensome to themselves and their neighbours. They can talk of nothing but women and the turf;—of both, in what a tone!—of both, seldom without a curse!—Thank Heaven, I can prize a horse without wanting to make a bargain of it,—or a woman, without desiring to make a boast of her partiality;—and above all, thank Heaven, I have hopes which render these enjoyments secondary. His Royal Highness has promised to bring me forward in his party in a way to secure my return to parliament at no distant period; and, that career once opened, to what may I not aspire?"

Even to himself, Grenfell was uncandidly slow in answering the question. He fancied that he aspired only to distinction, and through distinction to place; when, in fact, distinction and place were only valuable in his eyes as

entitling him to pretend to the hand of Julia Loveden.

Less sagacious than his cousins, or perhaps too indolent to persist in a steady view of the case, Sir Henry Woodbridge, on perceiving with what eagerness Grenfell threw himself into the coterie of Carlton House, decided that Bessy must have been mistaken, and that Frank's apparent devotion at the Raynhams had been the result of accident or caprice. It was clearly impossible that the *ame damnée* of Ministers could give his niece to the *protegé* of the Prince and pet of Sheridan; and Frank's overt assiduity to the Whigs seemed intended as an open denial of the surmises to which his conduct had given rise. For a moment, indeed, Sir Henry felt ashamed of his previous suspicions, and was on the point of rushing open-armed to his cousin to avow his faults. But reflection reminded him that this sudden demonstration might be interpret-

ed into courtiership of the favoured courtier. Observation soon assured him that, in the excitement of the season's pleasures, his sullenness had been lost upon Grenfell.

But, from the moment his way was clear as a suitor for Miss Loveden's hand, Sir Henry's ardour evaporated. Julia was on the point of quitting town with her uncle and aunt for Raynham Lodge, where every advantage awaited him. As a country neighbour, it was only natural and proper for him to resort to their society; while, in London, his sudden partiality for the most Tory of Tory coteries would have seemed to require explanation in a new-fledged Whig. Instead, however, of accompanying or following Lady Mary and Miss Grenfell to Hursley Park, he attached himself to London from choice, as Grenfell from necessity.

The truth was, that his mother, always a tiresome companion, had just received a provocation which rendered her society insupport-

able. From daybreak till sunset a single topic occupied her thoughts or conversation. Her former irritation concerning the Beckfords was nothing compared with her present exasperation concerning Bessy Grenfell; and as, for once, Sir Henry happened to coincide with the way of thinking which had caused his cousin to "sail in the north of my lady's opinion," he had no mind to sit as umpire upon the case.

The source of their dissensions was a remote one,—even that solemn interview between Lord Teviot and Peter Hartwell in which the ex-pedagogue had been commissioned to feel the pulse of his sick or sorrowful pupil.

Wearied by his efforts to obtain an interview with Lord Warkworth, Peter, having at length found his way to the presence of the young prig, exhausted his rhetoric and his patience to little purpose. Lord Warkworth, accustomed by parliamentary experience to listen unlistening to orations of any degree of wordi-

ness, sat by unmoved during Peter's exertions of eloquence: like an oyster, he gave no sign of animation save by occasionally gaping; and poor Peter was finally compelled to betake himself to his proofs at Cadell's, leaving the virgin fortress of the young gentleman's confidence uninvaded.

Accident, the providence of the undeserving, favoured him in a strait which, as he rightly conjectured, threatened ruin to his hopes of preferment. On emerging from the dingy shop of the clerical bibliopole, he was run against by his cousin John, who was rushing from the exhibition at Somerset House, to dine with Frank Grenfell; after which they were to proceed together to the little snuggery at the Haymarket for the first representation of one of Morton's clever comedies.

"I can't stop to talk to you!" cried John. "I have promised not to keep Frank waiting. He is to meet me at Stevens's at six."

Dolorously did poor Peter recal to mind that,

while the tutor by whom Grenfell had been so shamefully neglected was thus affectionately entertained, he, who had whitened his hair by his labours in drumming knowledge into the empty pericranium of Lord Warkworth, had not received from either father or son the slightest hint of an invitation.

"I will walk with you towards Bond-street, then," he replied with a heavy sigh. "But do not hurry or heat yourself, it is not yet five o'clock."

"Isn't it, by Jove? As usual, then, I've calculated badly. I never wear a watch. I always take my chance; somehow or other, one stumbles through the day."

Again Peter sighed. Of all the cardinal virtues, prudence had been hitherto his darling; but, profaning his creed, he now began to suspect that stumblers get on in life as well as the calculating and sure-footed.

"Well! And what brings you from Oxford?" cried John, as they pushed on with the

throng towards Charing Cross. "Has old Teviot done the handsome thing yet? They tell me a word from him to the Chancellor would provide for you at once."

"To the Chancellor! It is as much as I can do to get a civil word to myself," replied Peter, piqued into candour. "Lord Teviot visits upon my head his son's natural deficiencies; as if I were accountable for a young man of three-and-twenty preferring tennis and billiards to the speeches of Mr. Bankes and Mr. Secretary Ryder!"

"Does he show so much taste?" cried John heartily. "Then, my dear fellow, I wish you joy; you have made more out of that lad than I ever expected?"

"You must not take me literally," remonstrated the sedate Peter; "but" —

"Not take you literally?" interrupted his unceremonious coz. "Better and better! When your sobership begins to romance, there's a chance that Wilberforce may edit the next number of Irish Melodies."

"I mean only to express," resumed Peter peevishly, "that Lord Teviot is disappointed by his son's inapplication to business, and considers me chargeable with his unfitness to take office."

"And so you are. You chose to make him a scholar when it is his cue to be a dunce. Those precious Tories whom you delight to honour are afraid of people who know more than themselves. See how they have served Canning!—However, to do poor Warkworth justice, he bids fair to be dull enough for the party. When he left Oxford, I would have prophesied him an under-secretary by this time; and, that I am a true prophet, witness the brilliant success of my friend Frank, now one of the most distinguished young fellows about town!"

"What distinguishes him most in my opinion," said Peter with bitter consciousness, "is his grateful regard for yourself."

"You have heard, then, about the chaplaincy?"

"What chaplaincy?"

"Four months ago, I got a scarf from the Duke of Huntley, who was only known to me by name, with a letter from Grenfell, informing me that his friend Tom Hounslow had recommended me to the Duchess. — Who had recommended me to Frank's friend Tom Hounslow, I need not inform you."

Again did Peter heave a sigh that exhaled to the granite nostrils of the lion gracing the portal of Northumberland House. "The Teviot family have never as yet shown me the smallest token of civility," said he; "yet I am convinced they would be seriously offended if I accepted preferment from any other source. I fancy my best chance is to stick to my college, and sink into the drowsy comforts of a fellowship. Lord Teviot sent me this morning to pump his son, with a view of discovering how he manages to idle away his time."

"And you discovered" —

—"Nothing! He was as close as wax."

"You deserved it, for undertaking any such dirty mission! Stupid as he is, he discovered in your shamefacedness the spy-paternal."

"Why, what would you have done on such an occasion?"

"Either declined the office, or inquired of Warkworth, in plain English, what he had been doing with himself that gave so much offence to his father."

"You don't know him! Lord Warkworth is a person with whom no one dare take such a liberty."

"The deuce! he isn't.—I wish you could have witnessed some of the liberties taken with him by Frank Grenfell yesterday morning."

"When—where?" demanded Peter with growing interest.

"At Lady Mary Woodbridge's, where Warkworth passes half his time in boring the family to death."

"Why not tell me so at first? You have afforded the very information for which I was so anxious. — What takes him to Lady Mary's?"

"Oho! now you are pumping me! But allow me to save you the trouble. I can't allow a man bearing my name to beat about the bush. Lord Warkworth goes to Clifford-street, I conclude, because the house contains one of the handsomest women in London."

"Surely Lady Mary is a woman of a certain age?"

"Lady Mary! — my dear Peter, you deserve to live and die in cloisters! Don't you know that Frank has a sister? Have you never heard that Miss Grenfell is one of the finest — (I won't say *women* again, or you will be making more mistakes,) — one of the finest and cleverest girls in existence?"

"God bless my soul!" ejaculated Peter, frighted from his propriety, and perceiving at once the importance of the intelligence,

"Perhaps then, after all, it may be too late?"

"Too late for what?" inquired John, pausing for a moment to look at his watch, with reference to his dinner-hour.

"Too late to prevent my unfortunate young friend making a fool of himself."

"Decidedly; for in my opinion he has been doing nothing else for the last dozen years."

"Pho, pho! you understand my meaning well enough. You know as well as I do that I refer to your hint of his attachment to this Miss Grenfell."

"My dear fellow, I hinted nothing. I said in plain terms that Lord Warkworth was probably attracted to Clifford-street by Frank Grenfell's charming sister; which, so far from thinking a proof of folly, I consider the only reasonable demonstration of his life."

"Why, I always understood from you that the Grenfells have no fortune?"

"What Lord Teviot would call none.—

And what signifies? What the devil do such people as Lord Warkworth and his father want with money? — Rolling in riches, yet the country providing for them as if they were paupers!"

"At least, Lord Teviot has a right to look for connection for his son?"

"And if he do, the Grenfells are as well born as his younger grandchildren will be."

"Certainly, as far as regards mere birth. But there is a great difference between being cousin to an obscure peer of small fortune like Lord Waterton"—

— "And son to one of his Majesty's Cabinet Ministers! — I grant you! — A China orange to Lombard-street! — I am not sure, however, that in the sequel it may not turn out a surer card to be sister to Frank Grenfell, than son to an Earl of Teviot. When the sun shines on our side of the house, you know, it will be black as Erebus on yours. — And now, good-b'ye, my dear Peter; for here lies my road

to Duke-street, and I have to change my dress for dinner. After the play, I am to accompany Grenfell to some party or other, and must not discredit him."

To hear all this, might have put a less conscientious man than Peter Hartwell out of conceit of his duty. John was better rewarded for doing nothing, than he for all his praiseworthy exertions. John was promoted—John was fêted—John was actually loved,—while he was kept at the distance of an upper servant. Of course, he did not take into the account that John had cultivated the affections of his pupils; that they loved him because he first loved *them;* while Lord Warkworth had, perhaps, discovered that he was nothing more in the eyes of Peter Hartwell than the heir to an earldom!

CHAPTER III.

Ambition is a passion arising from the proud desire of honour and distinction; but when the splendid trappings in which it is caparisoned are removed, it is found to consist of envy, pride, and covetousness.

BURTON.

IT is a remarkable circumstance that parents and guardians of all ranks of life, however decent their nature or smooth their breeding on ordinary occasions, fancy themselves privileged, the moment a marriage unsatisfactory to their expectations impends over their ward or offspring, to indulge in the most frantic exasperation. The fury of

"The cubless tigress, in its jungle raging,"

is mild and patient compared with the wrath

of the dowager who discovers a young heiress under her charge to be in correspondence with an ensign of the Coldstream; and even fathers, albeit grey-headed and right honourable men, have been known to indulge in language far from Chesterfieldian on finding their son-and-heir affianced to some damsel whose merits exceeded her property or prospects. In such domestic points most people are tyrants; using of course the tyrant's plea—that they tyrannize for the good of their subjects, while expending a vast deal of vituperation to make manifest a vast deal of selfishness and pride.

"In love with that niece of Lady Mary Woodbridge's?" cried the Earl, after giving audience to Peter Hartwell's communication on the morrow,—"an humble companion?—a poor relation, kept to answer letters and comb the lapdog?—Impossible! Warkworth could not so forget himself!"

Peter Hartwell ventured on a small quota-

tion from Horace; but the nervous smile with which it was delivered provoked no corresponding twitch from the lips of his patron.

"Fool! madman that I was, to have those people at my table!" cried Lord Teviot.—"I might have guessed what good would come of a plot of that goose Clangarvan's hatching! I have no doubt that his proposals about that Hursley peerage were the mere pretext for an introduction between the families! Of course it would suit the stupid old rascal to strengthen his connections at my expense!—Great God! a young man who might command what match he pleased,—a young man who is considered one of the greatest catches about town,—to throw himself away on a girl who is scarcely a step above a chambermaid!"

"Your lordship is perhaps unaware," remonstrated Peter, (unaware in his turn of his patron's proficiency in all the kith-and-kinships of fashionable life,) "that Miss Grenfell's father was son to the Earl of Waterton?"

"*Younger* son, sir! An unprincipled spendthrift who died in the King's Bench!"

"His example, at least, can have held no influence, my lord, over his children, who were infants at the time of his decease."

"Am I to understand then, sir, that you are the advocate of my son's rebellion?" demanded Lord Teviot ferociously.

"By no means. I merely wished to afford information which I trusted would prove consolatory to your lordship."

"The marriage is settled, then?" cried Lord Teviot, turning white with rage.

"Not that I am aware of, my lord. I concluded, by your defining the conduct of Lord Warkworth as rebellion, that some prohibition on the subject must have passed your lordship's lips."

"Sir, I am no pedant in the choice of my expressions—

'No word-catcher, that lives on syllables,'"

exclaimed Lord Teviot haughtily. "Among honourable men and reasonable beings there is such a thing as tacit prohibition as well as positive interdiction. My son, aware of my projects for his advancement in life, is as fully warned, sir, that I will never give my consent to his marriage with an obscure penniless girl, as if a deed had been drawn up to that effect between us, and signed in presence of the Lord Chancellor."

"My apprehensions, then, may possibly have outstepped the fact," observed Peter Hartwell respectfully. "Your lordship requested me to make inquiries respecting Lord Warkworth's employment of his time. All I am prepared to certify is, that a considerable portion of it is devoted to a daily visit to the house of Lady Mary Woodbridge."

"And from whom, sir, did you extract this intelligence?"

"It was voluntarily afforded me, my lord, by my cousin, Mr. John Hartwell, the gentle-

man who accompanied Sir Henry Woodbridge and Mr. Grenfell to Oxford."

"Mr. John Hartwell? The young man whom I saw last night with young Grenfell at Lady Mary Russell's?"

"Poss-ibly — prob-ably, my lord," stammered Peter, surprised.

"A very gentlemanly young man," observed Lord Teviot, "who was especially presented to my notice by Lady Mary."

Again Peter recognised the good offices of Frank.

"I noticed the similarity of name with your own, Mr. Hartwell; but saw no likeness to warrant the conjecture of relationship. I shall not forget that I stand indebted to Lady Mary's *protégé* in so serious a matter as this friendly warning respecting my son."

"I owe it to my cousin (who is incapable of meditating an act injurious to the Grenfell family,)" interposed Peter eagerly, "to apprise your lordship that John Hartwell, in mention-

ing the fact, was totally unaware of any peculiar interest your lordship might have in circumventing Lord Warkworth's projects."

"I will not do you the injustice, sir, to suppose any cousin of yours such an ass as to imagine Mr. Grenfell's sister an advantageous match for my only son," replied Lord Teviot with a sneer, attributing the uneasiness of Peter to jealousy of his cousin's rising influence. "But enough on the subject. I shall lose no time in taking my precautions. Your stay in London, Mr. Hartwell, will, I conclude, be of some duration: I trust to have the honour of seeing you again, before you return to Oxford."

Dismissed and disheartened, poor Peter turned his steps once more from the doorsteps of the great man, secretly marvelling at the luck which turned all chances to gold in the hands of his reckless cousin, and to lead in his own. *He* had wasted in the service of Lord Teviot precious years which, devoted to scholastic pursuits, might have placed his name pre-emi-

nent in the golden roll of academic annals. And what was the result? Lord Teviot remembered only of Peter Hartwell the amount of salary annually earned by the needy scholar who officiated as tutor to his son!

But it was now his lordship's turn to become conscious of those contrarie ties which he had fancied created only for the torment of the vulgar. His embryo Lord Chatham — his incipient premier — his hereditary gobbler and giver of good things — was about to rush headlong into nothingness. Instead of proving a second Ulysses, and stopping his ears with wax against the song of the Sirens, Warkworth had placed himself under the care of an aurist, in order that he might hear them more distinctly! The notion of marrying a Miss Grenfell!—a name unheard of in public life,—unfamiliar to the cashier of the Treasury,—unknown to the pages of the Red-book! — a coldly recognised cousin of a Lord Waterton, coldly recognised by the world! — what self-

sacrifice!—what indifference to his family prospects! Lord Teviot, who like his friend and partisan of Raynham Lodge would have married the whipper-in of the house in petticoats, for the certainty of political preferment, regarded Lord Warkworth as scarcely less than parricidal in the enormity of his guilt.

After due cogitation, however, Lord Teviot, one of the wisest fools much time has ever made, remembering to have read in story and heard in twaddle that nothing is so apt to confirm young gentlemen in an unbeseeming tender passion as paternal opposition, determined to make no sign to his son touching his grand discovery; but merely visit Lady Mary Woodbridge, (contriving, of course, to evade the hour of Lord Warkworth's daily visits,) and drop a hint of his power to cut off his son with a shilling at his death, and not allow him sixpence to live upon during his life-time, in case of his forming an imprudent marriage. Lady Mary's well-known weakness of mind

afforded hope she would be brought to believe that a father was likely to disinherit an only son, or an earl dissever the family estates from his hereditary title, on so slight a provocation.

Chance so far favoured his views, that, during her ladyship's absence from home, Lord Teviot was admitted to the presence of Miss Grenfell. Little surmising the object of the visit, Bessy came forward with polite apologies for the mistake, concluding that his lordship would accept the hint and depart; but to her surprise he not only seated himself with cold solemnity, but instantly commenced a formal harangue upon the brilliant prospects in life of his son. Conceiving, perhaps, that this was intended to recommend Lord Warkworth to her favour, Miss Grenfell, as soon as politeness would admit, endeavoured to put an end to the subject; but no sooner did she attempt the utterance of a syllable, than his lordship, accustomed by thirty years' experi-

ence in the House to pour his eloquence into unwilling ears, waved his hand with dignity, and "resumed"—

"I need scarcely, madam, inform you," said he with haughty sternness, "that the greatest expectations have been founded by this kingdom in general, and my own family in particular, upon the remarkable and precocious distinctions that awaited the academic career of Lord Warkworth. From his childhood, wonders were predicted in favour of this extraordinarily-gifted young man; and I may add, without paternal partiality, that, should any unforeseen occurrence wither a promise so auspicious, great indeed will be the mortification of his friends, his constituency, and various portions of the United Kingdom. Upon the individual rashly endeavouring to subvert the principles of my son by withdrawing him from a career traced out for him from infancy, —nay, I *may* say, previous to his very birth,— the indignation of the country will not fail to

expend itself. I say not this, madam, in the way of intimidation, but of warning," pursued the Earl, labouring to look imposing and improve the impression he fancied he had made; while Bessy, wholly at a loss to conceive his object, bit her lips to avoid a smile.

"Far be it from me," continued the Earl, having at length vainly paused for a reply, "to disparage the position in life of a meritorious, and, as far as I am aware, an unexceptionable young lady, who will doubtless meet with a suitable alliance when convinced of the inadmissibility of her present views. Be assured, madam, that I heartily desire your advancement in life; and regret only that the narrow-sighted policy of those by whom you are surrounded should have led you to miscalculate your pretensions."

Bessy Grenfell's gravity was now thoroughly overmastered by the capable air with which Lord Teviot delivered these pompous impertinences; nor was her mirth diminished by the

indignation it served to call forth. The more elevated grew the head and language of his lordship, the more unrestrained was Bessy's laughter; when, just as he was adding to his exhortations certain bitter strictures on her ill-manners, Lady Mary Woodbridge and her son, whom she had encountered at the door, made their appearance.

"What *is* the matter?—What can be the *meaning* of all this?" ejaculated her ladyship, perceiving, from the lofty tone and heightened colour of Lord Teviot, that something was amiss. "You have met, *I trust*, with nothing *unpleasant* in my house?" she continued, addressing the Earl.

"I have only to regret that your ladyship's absence from it on my arrival," replied he with a stormy brow, "should have placed me under the necessity of communicating facts to this young lady, which might have been more properly addressed to yourself; and which, *from* yourself, would have met with more

decorous attention. Your ladyship will pardon me if I repeat to Miss Grenfell, in your presence, the expression of my surprise that a matter so serious as a paternal interdiction of her marriage with my son should produce this outburst of levity! I discover with regret that want of sense and want of manners may be added to want of fortune and connection, among the young lady's disqualifications to become Viscountess Warkworth!"

"Bessy, you really shock and amaze me!" cried Lady Mary, penetrated by the denunciations of the solemn old gentleman, whom, as a cabinet minister, her coronet-seeking heart had long held in veneration. But, ere Miss Grenfell could reply in disculpation, Sir Henry, who was loitering in the adjoining drawing-room till Lord Teviot should take his departure, came forward, and begged to be acquainted with his causes of complaint against his cousin.

"In the absence of Miss Grenfell's brother,"

observed Woodbridge with spirit, "I am entitled to demand an explanation of whatever unhandsome remarks may be hazarded upon her conduct."

"Without entering, sir, into the question of your rights," replied Lord Teviot in a milder tone, "I have no hesitation in replying that Miss Grenfell, after labouring to entrap the affections of my son, has treated my remonstrances with impertinence and contempt."

"These are serious charges," cried Sir Henry, directing a smiling and significant glance towards Bessy. "How say you, Miss Grenfell? — Do you plead guilty of any unfair designs upon the heart and hand of Lord Warkworth?"

"I leave it to him to answer the question," replied Miss Grenfell, having now recovered her usual propriety of deportment, "as it was only this morning I entered fully into the question, in replying to the proposals with which I was honoured by Lord Warkworth."

"Proposals? — actual proposals? — interrupted Lord Teviot in consternation.

"I knew it would come to that!" ejaculated the overjoyed Lady Mary. "She will be a Countess after all!"

"Lord Warkworth may not yet have destroyed my letter, or object to communicate it to your lordship," mildly resumed Miss Grenfell. "I must however entreat, my lord, you will do me the justice to remember, and to inform your son, that I was driven to this exposure of his sentiments solely by your own discourtesy."

Either involuntarily or from feminine malice, Miss Grenfell's manner and tone afforded a curious parody of those assumed towards her by the Earl; and, as if determined to enhance her triumph and his mortification, Sir Henry, who entertained no doubt of her intentions, proceeded to inquire, "We are to understand, then, that you have declined the honour of Lord Warkworth's hand?"

A bow of assent conveyed the young lady's reply; while Lord Teviot's exclamation of "You have acted most honourably and judiciously! — You saw at once the madness of intruding into a family resolved to reject such a connection!" was almost drowned in Lady Mary's outcry of "Refused him? — refused a Viscount? — refused one of the first matches in the kingdom? — madness, — folly, — infatuation!"

"Lest, however, you should imagine my conduct to have been influenced by a sense of my own unworthiness to match with your son," resumed Miss Grenfell, piqued into the assumption of some degree of spirit by the empty arrogance of the Earl, "allow me to assure you that, had Lord Warkworth's whole family joined with him in requesting me to become his wife, my answer would have been the same. Your incivility, my lord, justifies me in declaring what delicacy would have otherwise prompted me to conceal, that were Lord

Warkworth King of England instead of Lord Teviot's heir, I should still have disliked his society too much to accept him as a companion for life."

Indignant as Lord Teviot felt at Miss Grenfell's avowal, his delight at getting rid of all apprehension of so wretched a daughter-in-law, overcame every other feeling. His exit was hasty and unceremonious. It was the angry aunt who remained, to scold and recriminate; and had not Sir Henry (who had never admired his cousin half so much as when rebutting the insults of Lord Warkworth's father) interfered to put some measure upon her wrath, it is impossible to guess from what extremities Miss Grenfell might have become the sufferer.

"To think," cried or rather sobbed her ladyship,—"to think that we are about to return to Hursley Park not a tittle better than when we arrived in London for the season! I who betted with Lady Raynham, the last

time we all dined at the Lodge, that before six months were out she would see my son a member of the Upper House, leaving Droning-ton and Swansborough to the discretion of Ministers! What will the Crewes and the Beckfords say? What will the Danstons think, when they find us return as we came? Only last Monday did I get a government frank from Lady Raynham to send down to poor old Mrs. Danston a pair of Bavarian knitting-needles, and the news that Bessy's marriage with a handsome young Viscount was all but settled."

"How could you reconcile it to your con-science to make a Treasury frank the vehicle of two such gross impositions?" replied Sir Henry. "Warkworth is an ugly dog, as well as a stupid hound; and you might have seen from the first that Bessy Grenfell would have nothing to say to him."

"What right had she to refuse such a connection?—I only ask you what right Miss

Grenfell had to reject a marriage so advantageous to the whole family? I shall never get over it, Harry! I must send for Chilver this moment. It is almost too terrible a trial to have my only son thwart all my views by seceding from the invariable principles of his parents; and the niece, to whom I have shown such marked and uniform kindness, defeat my plans for her brilliant establishment in life, by petulance and folly. But I wash my hands of you both! You, Harry, will live and die a Baronet; and you, Bessy, a miserable old maid!"

CHAPTER IV.

There is a rabble among the gentry as well as among the commonalty; though their fortunes do somewhat gild their infirmities, and their purses compound for their follies. SIR THOMAS BROWN.

ALTHOUGH the vehemence of Lady Mary's denunciations appeared in the first instance highly entertaining to Sir Henry Woodbridge, yet, when he found that, every day on his return to Clifford-street, his mother's hysterical distresses were recapitulated, and Bessy Grenfell denounced as the most selfish and unfeeling of her sex, he grew tired of defending a cause that so little needed defence.

"She don't like him, and there's an end on't," cried he one day, after seeing Bessy fairly hinted and innuendoed out of the room.

"But she ought to like him! When will she ever again have the alternative offered her of becoming a Viscountess?"

"What signifies, when you see that she is satisfied with her present condition?"

"Then she has a very mean spirit. To prefer dependence"—

—"Dependence upon her nearest relations rather than upon a stranger," cried young Woodbridge.

"Well, I must say, I should feel easier to be under obligations to my husband, than to know that myself and my brother were hanging-on upon a cousin."

"Never let me hear you utter that word again, I entreat!" cried Sir Henry, glowing with apprehension lest the charge should have been overheard by any living soul. "If I thought such an idea could influence Bessy Grenfell to marry a man in the smallest degree unacceptable to her, by G—! I would—I would"—

"Well! what would you do?"

"I could do nothing, I fear," replied Sir Henry petulantly, — "except never pardon the person by whom such a mortification had been suggested to her fine generous disposition."

"You are in love with her yourself, Harry!" cried Lady Mary, a sudden light breaking in upon her mind.

"No more than with old Mrs. Danston! But I respect her, and will not see her made uncomfortable. You must promise me to leave off tormenting her about that ass, Lord Warkworth."

"I will — I do, — (for it is too late now! With Lord Teviot's views, it is not likely that the young man's proposals should ever be renewed,) — "on condition that *you* promise *me*"—

"I make no conditions or reservations," interrupted Sir Henry, colouring with a suspicion of the tendency of Lady Mary's views.

"My father's niece shall not be made uncomfortable under my roof!"

The pronoun possessive grated almost as disagreeably on her ladyship's ear, as when applied to Hursley on occasion of the invitation to the Beckfords. But she had found on that occasion that her son was not to be trifled with. Her only consolation, therefore, on the present, was to moan over her griefs with Lord Clangarvan, who shared in his sister's opinion that sons and daughters are born to gentlemen and ladies to be disposed of in professions or marriage according to parental caprice; and that nothing can exceed the ill-usage endured by mammas and papas whose offspring, even when at an age to legislate for the country, presume to have a will of their own.

Of all prejudices tending to bring the touching commandment enforcing filial reverence into disrepute, this is the most narrow-sighted. To "honour our father and mother," certainly

implies no duty to obey their commands to the forfeiture of our self-respect; and though the French extend the legal authority of parents several years beyond the limit admitted in Great Britain, it may be doubted whether the age at which the right divine is allowed to operate in rendering absolute the will of a sovereign, ought not to be that at which a woman is allowed to select her partner for life, or a man his future calling. In an era when slavery is becoming extirpated in all parts of the globe, a new abolition act will perhaps be some day or other passed in favour of oppressed damsels and compulsory practitioners of the Black Arts or learned professions.

Sir Henry Woodbridge had fortunately attained the legal age of emancipation. But while escaping the annoyance of hearing his cousin scolded, by refusing to accompany the family to Hursley Park, he was necessarily exposed to the evils besetting a young man

of fortune who lingers in a London hotel when the more orderly portion of the community have quitted the metropolis. Already his rooms at Nerot's had attracted together a tolerable detachment of his Eton and Oxford chums, who, "uncursed with many a granted prayer" and the enjoyment of twenty thousand per annum, found it very agreeable to drink their hock and soda-water at his expense, between their labours for the public weal in the three regiments of Guards or some small official capacity; while a few favourites of fortune, gay and independent as himself, joined with him in getting up prize-fights, boat-races, or driving-matches to noisy dinners at Bedfont or Staines.

In the emptiness of town succeeding the London season, the class of persons delighting in such recreations becomes even now curiously ostensible; but previous to the popularity of yachting, which thins our fashionable clubs in July in favour of Ryde, Dover,

or the Mediterranean, the barbaric horde, which expends its manliness in noise and excess, retained full possession of the *pavé* between the birthdays of the King and Prince. Drinking exploits, and disgraceful excesses of every kind, seemed a necessary resource from the dulness and monotony of the deserted metropolis. The scanty number of clubs, and the formal nature of those most in fashion, threw these boy idlers into taverns and coffee-houses, where their offences became a source of distinction; and we cease to wonder at the vogue of the effeminate dandy school, in hearing recounted the ruffianisms of the preceding epoch, generating the disgusts to which the exquisites were indebted for toleration.

Young Woodbridge, however, was but a passive member of the confraternity. Want of occupation, want of excitement, induced him to welcome around him those whose mirth was loudest and whose love of pleasure most reckless. Without resources in himself or his

family, without any settled purpose to which to devote the wealth, on which if he did not pride himself, he felt it to be his passport to the favour of the world, he would have fallen sick of lassitude and ennui, but for the enlivenment of such tumultuous companions as Tom Hounslow, Lord Marytown, and a few similar associates, dignified by the title of the Devil-may-cares. He liked to lounge on the sofa in his dressing-gown after a mid-day breakfast, listening to Hounslow's recital of their having "jarveyed it down to Richmond the preceding day,—(four thoroughbred tits that were never in harness together before, who managed to kick poor Marytown's barouche to pieces as they were coming back over the bridge at night!) — while Marytown filled up the heroic measure with an account of the number of bottles of iced hock swallowed by the party, and the amount added to their bill at the Star and Garter for having smashed a handsome chandelier."

All this was flat and silly enough. But how else were half-a-dozen young men of fortune and fashion to enliven themselves in London during the dog-days? "Well-ordered house," or even a well-ordered club, was denied them. The only female society within reach was that of summer-theatre actresses, or a few broken-down women of *ton* of scarcely more honourable grade; and why upbraid the harum-scarum schoolboys of young Woodbridge's set for such vulgar pursuits, since (if we have writ our annals true) commanders-in-chief and legislators of the realm indulged at that period in equally discreditable associations! Yet it is in such orgies that high purposes and honourable resolves are melted away. Sir Henry was by no means the only one of the party possessed of abilities and qualities needing only cultivation to render him an honour to the community. But the tares implanted at public schools and fashionable colleges were overrunning the generous soil, to the extermination of all hope of harvest.

That Sir Henry felt conscious his gradually-deepening excesses needed apology, was manifest from his habit of accusing his mother's fretfulness and Frank Grenfell's alienation as the origin of the evil.

"Marytown was really *too* bad last night," said he one morning, under the influence of a qualmish headache, to young Wexford of the Guards, one of the newly initiated into the libertine party. "Whenever Marytown gets drunk, he grows blasphemous and disgusting; and then Hounslow is sure to interfere and get into a quarrel with him; and a quarrel is a bore, this deuced hot weather."

"Are you for the Greenwich party to-day?"

"Not I—I 'm fairly knocked up."

"Don't tell Marytown so," said Wexford, "or he'll be apt to knock you down. He counts upon you, I know. Dinner is ordered at the Ship."

"Yes—and the guests are ordered too; that horrible fair friend of Hounslow's, the singer

at the Lyceum! Between ourselves, I detest that sort of company. I cannot see the pleasure of associating with a silly vulgar woman, whom, if we were to meet her in society, we should vote disgusting. Hounslow calls her *piquante!* — the piquancy of a kitchen skewer!"

"It does not do to play the critic too nicely on such occasions," replied Wexford. "Obliged to stay in town all summer, I am glad to content myself with picking up amusement where I can find it. But you are not on duty? Why do you stay in this infernal hot place?"

"I shall stay only till it is time for the moors. My country place is in such a deuced dull neighbourhood!"

"But you might take down your own party."

"Not exactly. I have a mother and cousin living there who would find Marytown and Hounslow more preposterous than I do."

"Do you mean that handsome girl who

used to go about with Lady Mary this spring, to whom Warkworth was making up ?"

"Exactly. Grenfell's sister."

"The finest creature in town! No wonder you are difficult about female society! Surely, with such an inmate, you might reconcile yourself to even the dullest of neighbourhoods!"

"One never recollects to look at a cousin with whom one has been passing half one's life. Besides, Bessy Grenfell is not much more amusing than the rest of them."

"Then she must be very different from her brother," said Wexford. "In my opinion, Frank is the pleasantest fellow breathing."

"And so he is in mine. When I first came to town and Frank was come-at-able, no need of dinners at the Bush or the Talbot to rouse my spirits. But I never see him now! Always at Carlton House! He first brushes in for a moment to shake hands — and off again. So long as Grenfell was with us at Hursley, it was pleasant enough; or so long as I was sure

of him at dinner, I wanted nothing else. 'Tis entirely owing to losing sight of *him* that I have had recourse to amusements which leave me a legacy of headache and heartache."

Woodbridge was in hopes that Captain Wexford would express some opinion concerning Grenfell's conduct. He did not want him to call it "ungrateful," like Lady Mary; he did not want him to call it "infatuated," like Bessy; he did not want him to call his cousin "the Prince's toady," like Tom Hounslow,—or "a snob," like Lord Marytown; but he wished him to let fall some comment on the brevity and abruptness of Frank's visits, which excited some degree of uneasiness in the mind of Woodbridge.

Restored to all his primitive regard for Grenfell by the demonstrations which had placed an eternal barrier between him and the Raynhams, Sir Henry had begun seriously to inquire of himself whether, during the continuance of his mistrust, he had betrayed no change of senti-

ment towards his cousin. Unpractised in deceit, he feared that his manner might have proclaimed to Frank the real resentment harboured in his heart; that he might have appeared cold, haughty, disdainful; and that the delicate feelings of Frank, though wounded past forgiveness, forbad him to display an animosity unsuitable towards his own and his sister's benefactor.

"He perceives my renewed confidence and affection," argued Woodbridge with himself, "and feels that we ought to be friends. But I fear I understand the motive of his hurried visits. He cannot be always with the Prince. He is less at Carlton House than he used to be at the Russells'; in the height of which *liaison* he always found time to lounge away an hour with me when he saw me anxious for his company. But now he rushes in and out again, if he finds me alone; or, if Hounslow and the rest of them are here, disappears after a good story and a laugh or two. I see plainly

how it is! — He has not altogether forgiven me. He never looks me directly in the face. He seems to hesitate when I hold out my hand. — I would give worlds for a candid explanation with Frank. I could give worlds to open my heart to him, as I would wish *his* opened to *me*. But that can never be! Such is the course of our mutual position; almost brothers, we are in some things worse than strangers. He must always remain the obliged, and I the benefactor; and people standing on such different levels cannot rush into each other's arms. The loss, God knows, is mine! What an altered fellow I should be, were Grenfell my habitual companion! What a low grade of animal is Hounslow, compared with Frank? Though no book-worm, and as idle a vagabond as ever breathed, there is always some good to be obtained from his conversation, — some kind or generous sentiment, — or some outbreak of common sense at variance with his conduct. There is nothing

vulgar or stupid in Frank, such as is always breaking out in Marytown. Yes! I would give my right hand to know how I offended him, and to bring things between us to their former footing."

CHAPTER V.

A blow with a word strikes harder than a blow with a sword. BURTON'S ANATOMIE.

IF Sir Henry Woodbridge had some pretext for complaining of the dulness of town, Bessy Grenfell had greater reason to murmur against the insipidity of the country: Hursley Park had lost even its moderate share of neighbourly attraction.

Lady Mary had unnecessarily distressed herself concerning the sensation which the failure of her projects was likely to excite among her friends; and had she fulfilled her design of proceeding to Buxton or Harrowgate, in order to avoid the first outbreak, a journey of four hundred miles and its cost of two hundred

pounds would have been miserably thrown away.

The Beckfords, in a state of domestic commotion, had no leisure to exult over her mortification. From the day when Sir William, following the advice of old Crewe, had dismissed from his establishment fiddles, fiddlers, and fiddle-cases, all harmony, as might naturally be expected, was marred in the family. Lady Beckford was indignant that, for the first time, her voice went for nothing. The girls hung up their harps upon a willow, and refused to be comforted for the loss of their dear Radicati; and, having no other pursuit or occupation than music, their time hung heavy on their hands, and they hung heavy on the world. The neighbourhood protested that Oak Hill was no longer the same place. The merry strains of the three good-natured girls had given place to a dolorously minor key; and, had the sympathies of Swansborough been aware that the crotchet was insinuated

into Sir William's head by the intermeddling old general, Sir Robert would have been made to quaver; but as he continued to protest that, "upon his soul and honour! he didn't know what was come to the Beckfords," even Radicati entertained no suspicion that it was to *him* he was indebted for dismissal.

Between Raynham Lodge and Hursley Park, meanwhile, politics had occasioned a mighty gulf. If his lordship bore with the politics of Frank Grenfell, it was because the young man had neither vote nor interest, and had never been offered on sale to government for a barony. But they felt that they had some reason to resent the unaccountable conduct of Sir Henry Woodbridge; or such was the interpretation placed by Lady Mary on their conduct, when she saw that, even between Bessy and Julia Loveden, a coldness was arising. So far from compassionating her disappointment concerning Lord Warkworth, Lady Raynham was evidently amazed that her friend

Lady Mary should ever have fancied her indigent niece a match for the son of the Earl of Teviot.

Dissatisfied with her friends, and still more dissatisfied with her son, Lady Mary inflicted hourly martyrdom upon Bessy in her unreasonable explosions of wrath; but good sense and good temper supplied forgiveness for all. Miss Grenfell, secure from her cousin's intrusions, resumed her old haunts in the library; and, when compelled into contact with the fretful old lady, listened with patience and replied without disrespect.

But Bessy was not without troubles of her own. At their first and only visit to Raynham Lodge, Lady Raynham had treated her with a degree of hauteur and impertinence altogether unaccountable when contrasted with her vehement civilities towards the whole of the Hursley Park family during her courtship of Sir Henry. Did she conceive the Baronet's declaration of political war to proceed from the

influence of the Grenfells? Or was she only desirous of marking her displeasure at Bessy's presumption in her conquest of Lord Warkworth?—It did not much matter! It was not Lady Raynham's estrangement that could produce either pain or pleasure in her mind; nor would Bessy have given it a thought but for the strange alteration of manner in Miss Loveden. It is true they met only in the crowded drawing-room of Raynham Lodge, invariably thronged with morning visitors. But, even then and there, Julia, who was no respecter of places, had hitherto never lacked an opportunity to talk with perfect unreserve to her friend. The wild frankness of her character constituted, in fact, in Bessy's eyes a greater charm than her beauty; and, when she now beheld her cold and distant, she felt that she had lost her friend. Miss Loveden was, probably, aware of the anxiety with which Bessy had watched her intimacy with Frank; and, though her fears were necessarily terminated by the

separation between them, they were perhaps still resented by the mortified friend. The change in Julia's deportment cost her a pang. Julia was the only youthful companion in whose society she had ever taken delight. Miss Loveden's chivalrous sense of honour,—her disdain of the paltry considerations influencing the people among whom she lived,—her cleverness and vivacity, subdued only by the warmth of an affectionate heart,—were qualities which Bessy knew how to prize: it caused her many a sigh to know that she had forfeited the regard of such a friend.

Resentment of Lady Raynham's incivility, and consciousness that Julia's resentment had its origin in the remarks on which she had ventured to Sir Henry concerning the perils and dangers of Frank, forbad her to attempt by letter any *éclaircissement* of the business; and her anger, like almost every anger, took an erroneous direction. She accused her cousin of having violated her confidence; she would

never forgive Sir Henry for having repeated what had given pain to others, and served no purpose except to deprive her of the only pleasant acquaintance to be found in the neighbourhood of Hursley Park.

It was lucky for the young Baronet that he remained smoking, drinking, and committing and repenting excesses, at Nerot's Hotel, instead of attempting the rural felicities of a country gentleman; for Bessy's withdrawal of goodwill would certainly have little enhanced the charms of home. But towards Hampshire, even while relying on her friendliness, his partiality was small. The moment grouse-shooting began, he was off to the moors, to pass a month or two with Tom Hounslow at the Duke of Huntley's; after which, he was to accompany Lord Marytown to Doncaster races, then settle himself in Leicestershire for the winter! It was in vain that Lady Mary wrung her hands; he was beyond reach of expostulation: and Bessy, when forcibly appealed to in the

most emphatic phraseology of her aunt, had the cruelty to reply, that it was very natural a young man so independent as Sir Henry Woodbridge should gratify his desire of seeing something of the world.

Her ladyship, who, with her habitual want of tact, had flattered herself of controlling the wild impulses of a fine young man of two-and-twenty, and tying him to her maternal apron-string, was frantic on finding that the young eaglet had already taken wing, and was not to be recalled to the nest. During his six months' residence at Hursley, her chief care had been to thwart all his wishes, molest all his acquaintances, repress his authority, and reduce him to a cypher in his own house. But no sooner was she certified that he had made up his mind to seek a more agreeable mode of life, than she persuaded herself that the only object of her interference had been to secure the enjoyment of the happiest of homes to the most darling of sons. To seek for sympathy from the

Beckfords or Raynhams was, she knew, hopeless; and she accordingly carried her griefs to Danston Grange. With four goodly sons of their own, old Mr. and Mrs. Danston were, doubtless, prepared to understand "how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is, to have a thankless child!"

"Thank you—yes! I never saw a finer harvest!" said she, in reply to the polite inquiries of the old agronomer. "But what signifies, my dear Mr. Danston, whether the crops at Hursley are good or bad? Who is there to take an interest in the place? Two poor ignorant women, like my niece and myself, are little able, God knows, to look after such an estate."

"So you used to say when my friend Harry was at Eton," replied the old gentleman. "But, now the young fellow is come to man's estate, your cares are over; and you have nothing to do but sit down and enjoy one

of the most complete places in the kingdom."

"Ah, Mr. Danston!" sighed Lady Mary; "there's the rub! There lies my misfortune! You, my dear sir, who have sons of your own, need not be told of the headstrong nature of young men of Harry's years."

"Headstrong! Why, the only fault I ever detected in him was his inert submission to the guidance of other people. I always used to quiz Sir Henry for being too idle to have a will of his own."

"But that does not prove that he is willing to submit to mine!" exclaimed Lady Mary, betraying her real cause of complaint. "No doubt you find, my dear sir, the impossibility of bringing your young people to be governed by reasonable motives?"

"I have tried to give them reasonable motives, and now leave them to be governed by themselves," replied the old gentleman, in a

luminous compendium of true parental philosophy. "There can't be better lads than my boys. We try to make their home pleasant to them; and, in return, they try to make their company pleasant to us. Wherever they go, they never find themselves more considered than at the Grange. Their pursuits are manly and honourable. They have no views to hide, and are consequently glad to be with those who have the nearest interest in them and their concerns."

"Ah! Mr. Danston, you are a happy man!" sighed Lady Mary, raising her eyes to heaven.

"A prudent one, madam!" replied the old gentleman. "From the time my children were born to me, I regarded them like my estate—as a thing committed to my charge to be improved by my vigilance and discretion. I knew that the uncultivated soil would yield me chickweed and thistles instead of thriving crops; and so, without either neglecting or

forcing my land or my family, I have brought both to the state which yields me competence and comfort. The boys are happy, the estate thriving, and I and my good woman content!"

"Ah! sir, it is easy to keep things under control, when on a moderate scale," said the lady of thousands of acres.

"Pardon me; the same principle may be applied to any extent. I flatter myself that both Hursley Park and my friend Harry would have thriven under my management; because I should neither have required grapes from thorns nor figs from thistles, nor expected my son's first beard to sprout white."

Indignant at finding her woes derided, and the cubbish tribe, who were to divide amongst them the ignominious two thousand per annum of Danston Grange, likened to her pampered darling, Lady Mary took a precipitate leave of her plain-spoken old friend, and hurried to the Crewes; the only family in the neighbour-

hood who confessed the influence of her title and fortune,—Lady Crewe, in spite and envy; Sir Robert, in subservience.

No sooner was the Hursley carriage seen entering the sweep-gate, than the General was at the hall-door, ready to hand out and welcome the portly sister of the Marquis of Glangarvan. But while Sir Robert redoubled his civil inquiries after the health of "my friend the young Baronet," his snuffy moiety comforted her spleen by significant civilities concerning "poor Miss Grenfell."

"Extremely sorry not to see her with your ladyship; was in hopes, poor thing! she was getting up her spirits," mumbled the old lady.

"My niece is perfectly well," replied Lady Mary, "and in excellent spirits."

"Poor dear! good courage! able to put a good face on't!" pursued the tormentor.

"A good face on what?" demanded Lady

Mary; who, in the misdemeanours of her son, had lost sight of those of her niece.

"To be sure, it was only natural Lord Teviot should oppose!" muttered Lady Crewe; "only natural!"

"Natural, but scarcely worth while, if you allude to Lord Warkworth's pretensions to Miss Grenfell's hand; for his lordship's opposition was not signified, ma'am, till the Viscount had been refused and dismissed," cried Lady Mary with kindling ire.

"Refused, eh?—dismissed, eh?" persisted Lady Crewe, interposing a pinch of snuff between each interrogation. "That must have been a sad mortification to the family!"

"Upon my soul and honour, you may say that!" interposed Sir Robert, apprehending a scolding-match between the ladies, such as had more than once enlivened the dull neighbourhood of Swansborough at their expense. "I, who was eye-witness to the poor Vis-

count's assiduities, can testify the excess of his attachment. By the way, my dear madam, your ladyship must positively do me the honour to come and admire a little bit of rock-work I am putting up on the high ground at the bottom of the garden, to shut out our view of the town—by subscription, I am proud to acknowledge, of the affluent and humane. My friend, Lady Raynham, has been so obliging as to contribute a handsome mass of felspar; the Beckfords good-naturedly sent me over a cart-load of flints; and the creeping-plants came from Danston Grange. By the Lord Harry! the thing won't cost me sixpence, and is worth its weight in gold!"

And having judiciously proposed a promenade in which Lady Crewe's pet rheumatism and colchicum forbad her to participate, Sir Robert enjoyed the full weight of Lady Mary's argument and arm while bowing her along the damp shrubberies of the villa.

"And so you have really allowed them to

entrap my friend the young Baronet to Huntley Castle!" cried he, as they hobbled along together. "A pretty plucking those fellows will make of it!—My friend, Sir William Beckford's nephew, young Mackenzie of Hawood, was stripped there of seventeen hundred pounds at lansquenet last season."

"My son is not fond of play," replied her ladyship: "gaming does not happen to be a vice of the Maclaren family."

"They may have had less opportunity to indulge it than a young fellow just come into his fortune, and cajoled, out of reach of his family, by a gang of the most fashionable blacklegs in the kingdom," observed the General.

"You don't mean that the Huntley Castle set are swindlers?" cried Lady Mary, aghast.

"Upon my soul and honour! I don't know by what polite name Master Tom Hounslow is pleased to dignify his feats; but, by George!

madam, I know what they would be called by the world, were he nephew to a Smithfield drover, instead of to the Duchess of Huntley."

"But Hounslow is not to join their party till Doncaster races," cried her ladyship.

"Doncaster races!—Oh Lady Mary!—into what have you suffered your only son to be trepanned?"

"But, my dear sir,"—

"A young man of so much expectation in the county!"—

—"But I assure you"—

—"A young man to whom Swansborough is looking forward with such fond anticipation!"—

—"But if you would only"—

—"A young man whose parliamentary career (though in opposition) would have electrified the country!"

"But what has poor Harry's trip to the moors, or to the St. Leger, to do with his standing for Swansborough?" screamed her ladyship at the top of her voice.

"Madam! He never will stand for Swansborough. Upon my soul and honour, I wouldn't give a rush for his prospects, now that he is fairly launched in that corrupt, dissolute, disgraceful set!"

"What will become of him!—What will become of me!" exclaimed Lady Mary, half crying with terror.

"You should have kept him at home, ma'am. By the Lord Harry! you should."

"And what else have I been labouring at for the last twelve months?"

"My dear Lady Mary, you laboured too much; you should have left things to take their course! *Ars est celare artem.* Your hook was too large. You put too much line on your twig."

"What twig?—what hook?—what art?" exclaimed the enraged lady. "You know as well as I, Sir Robert, that the Loveden affair blew over many months ago. Ask Lady Raynham, ask your friends the Beckfords,

whether Julia was not flirting in London in the most barefaced manner with my nephew, young Grenfell!"

"I have heard as much from them already," replied Sir Robert demurely; "and they and others were unanimous in praising your ladyship's good management."

"Why, what had I to manage for Frank Grenfell? What signify his flirtations to me?"

"Nothing, I admit; unless when intended to draw off lovely rivals who might interfere with his sister's views upon Sir Henry!"

"Bessy—Bessy Grenfell have views upon my son, and I countenance them?" cried the astonished Lady Mary.

"The project for pining him down to Hursley Park was not altogether a bad one," replied Sir Robert, intending to be jocular. "A handsome cousin at one's fireside is as good a tie to home as I ever happened to hear

of. Upon my soul and honour, I give your ladyship credit for the invention!"

"As I live and breathe, Sir Robert," cried Lady Mary, stopping short after having panted up hill, "such a notion never till this moment presented itself to my mind! — I protest I would as soon have my poor dear Harry marry the dairy-maid. Bessy is a good clever girl enough; but my daughter-in-law must be a woman able to advance Sir Henry's interests in life."

"Your son perhaps is of the same opinion; and, aware of the reports prevalent in the neighbourhood, chooses to keep out of the way till Miss Grenfell is settled."

"You think that Bessy's living with me is the cause of Harry's trip to the moors?"

"Upon my soul and honour, something very much like it! I should be sorry to make mischief. The affair is no business of mine: I only repeat the surmises of others. But by

the Lord Harry! my dear Lady Mary, you 'll never get your son to settle at Hursley till you 've managed to marry off your niece."

Startled by a view of the case at once so novel and plausible, Lady Mary Woodbridge shrugged her shoulders and grumbled her way home; and long and bitterly had Bessy Grenfell to rue the visiting of that day. All that she did, or left undone, now seemed amiss to her aunt. Always selfish and exacting, the old lady's partiality for Bessy's mild and reasonable nature had hitherto preserved her from the bitterer tasks of dependency. but her own son was naturally an object of dearer regard than her husband's niece, even without taking into account the difference of affection due to a girl with a hundred, or a young man with twenty thousand a year; and, as an obstacle to the domestic comfort of Sir Henry, Miss Grenfell grew hateful. Every day the patroness became more tiresome, the *protegée* more harassed; and though Bessy's good sense

secured her from repentance of having refused Lord Warkworth's offers, which would have made her a slave for life instead of for a year or two, she did sometimes regret that decorum forbad her to enjoy her independence according to her very limited means.

Her personal wants were within reach of even her scanty pittance; but to propose such a withdrawal from the protection of her family during her minority might lead to discussions injurious to the interests of Frank, and, above all, painful to his feelings. She did not wish to remind him that, in trifling with his means of advancement, he was trifling with the peace of mind of his sister; and that while his days were dissipated at the feet of a Lady Mary Russell, or Julia Loveden, or even a powerless Prince, he was not only riveting upon himself the chains of dependence, but upon the neck of an unprotected sister the collar of servitude.

CHAPTER VI.

The only disadvantage of an honest heart, is credulity.
SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

LIKE some parent who having seen a favourite child fall out of window, and, instead of giving up the ghost, start unhurt upon his legs, forgets in the joy of the moment to chide the heedlessness originating the accident, Lord Teviot's congratulations to his son on his escape from a marriage with Miss Grenfell were almost free from reproof.

While Lord Warkworth, like all poor spirits meanly vindictive, sat chewing the cud of bitterness, and resolving in what way he could chastise the indifference of the object of his passion, or vent it upon her brother, Lord

Teviot proceeded to enlarge with his usual wordy diffuseness upon the injury committed by a man against himself, his progenitors and posterity, by marrying a girl without sixpence, or the connections which make sixpences forthcoming. He pointed out, that to be a daughter of certain clans is not only a dower in itself, but the cause of being able to bestow dowers upon others; and, among the various disqualifications of Miss Grenfell to become his wife, did not fail to remark that she was the sister of a man ostracized by the Treasury, —a Pariah rejected by the high caste of Downing-street, —an infected wretch who had taken refuge in the fatal lazaretto of Carlton House.

It is scarcely credible by what a weight of obloquy the Prince and his adherents were systematically overwhelmed by the court during the period intervening between the first and second illness of George the Third. The courtier tribes of Windsor Castle numbered strong in proportion to the almost unexampled

duration of a reign which, for fifty years, had enabled their Majesties to increase the number of their partisans by the number of their benefactions. Loyalty is a snowball which grows as it goes; and the amount of obliged persons, obliged without sacrifice, in the common course of vacancies, and at the expense of the nation, included more than half the aristocracy, and surrounded the throne with grateful and consequently devoted satellites.

From these, the chief article of faith exacted was mistrust of the Prince of Wales. An object of uneasiness to his royal father, in a degree, probably, arising from mental infirmity and the painful relative position to which that infirmity had given rise, it was a recommendation to the Frogmore parasite that he had some idle tale to tell redounding to the depreciation of the heir-apparent; and, as the vices of a court become coarsely exaggerated when aped by the multitude, it was the custom

throughout London to describe the Prince as a monster of libertinism and effeminacy.

It is probable, however, that few households of the more fashionable classes could at that moment have been laid bare, without exhibiting greater excesses than those of Carlton House. The gallantries of the Prince, the crime of which he chiefly stood accused, were of a measured order; less the result of passion than of habit; and partaking of the nature of that ascribed to Louis XV. by his mistress Madame de Pompadour, who did not dare change her apartments, lest the disarrangement of ideas produced by going up a different staircase to visit her should alienate her custom-guided lover.

The absence of vices which in a private individual are accounted great, did not however preclude the absence of virtues which in a prince are accounted indispensable. There was no high-mindedness,—no preference for the

society of the noble and lofty,—no strength of purpose, no singleness of speech. There was nothing wholesome in the state of Denmark. The guests surrounding the festal board were recommended by some trivial *agrément*. One had a good voice, a second could accompany at sight, a third was able to swallow the greatest quantity of curaçoa with the least possible loss of the little sense in his possession. Another was an able caricaturist,—one could tell good stories,—another, stories that were *not* good, but comparable with those of Mendez Pinto. The able heads of the Whig party (viz. the able heads and sound hearts whose notions of political and moral equity were synonymous,—that nothing could be *wise* but that which was *right*,) held gravely aloof. Having been deserted in a stormy hour by the Prince of Wales, they were cautious and slow in the restoration of their trust; and it was perhaps because awed by their virtue, that his Royal Highness flung himself heels over head

into the centre of a ring of admiring mountebanks.

It was in the height of these demonstrations, the antipathy of the court party, and the mistrust of the Whigs, that a rumour suddenly arose which, like the first ominous rumbling of Vesuvius, struck panic into every hearer!—Symptoms of the King's disorder had recurred! The throne was again about to be shaken to its basis!

In the circumstance itself there was nothing to excite wonder, however much to inspire regret. At seventy years of age, the spirits of an infirm man, harassed by fifty of sovereignty, had been recently shaken by public and private calamities. The Corsican adventurer, now not only an anointed emperor but the ally and kinsman of emperors, was everywhere triumphant. Walcheren and Corunna were the gallant but disastrous exploits which opposed Napoleon's list of victories. Our greatest and wisest and bravest had sunk prematurely into

the grave; and no token appeared of that resuscitation of the British flag which has crowned our aftertimes with glory.

But this was not all. There was domestic care to embitter the pangs of kingly disappointment. The indiscretions of the Duke of York had exposed the name of royalty to popular contempt, and subjected a kind and honourable man to suspicions which, whatever his faults, were clearly inapplicable to his heedless, generous nature. A murderous attack upon one of his royal brothers had wrought a still more fearful odium. The Princess of Wales, daughter of the King's favourite sister, was furthering the purposes of her enemies by a degree of levity that still further degraded the attributes of royalty in the eyes of the people; and, in addition to all these mortifications, his daughter Amelia, the youngest, most beloved of all, was sinking after a life of perplexities into an untimely grave! The departure of this spirit of peace was the signal for that of his reason. The last impression to which his

Majesty's mind was susceptible was the touching farewell of the Princess!

But one year from the celebration of the national jubilee, commemorating the prolonged years and sovereignty of George III, the sound of affliction went forth anew from Windsor Castle.

The especial origin of the crisis, the parting from a favourite child, was however of so limited a nature that it was expected, even by those whose interests suggested the contrary, that the paroxysm would be short. The dying Princess, rather than the bewildered father, occupied the anguish of the royal family and the inquiries of the nation; and, during the interim between the 20th of October and the convocation of parliament, there was as much perplexity and intrigue among parties and party-men as would have furnished the empire of Austria from the accession of the House of Hapsburg.

From the inner shrine of the political temple at Carlton House, Frank Grenfell, by the

insignificance of his position and age, was necessarily excluded. He saw that much was going on, but heard little more than transpired to the rumours of the clubs. With all the rest of the world, Grenfell believed that the King's illness was the result of momentary excitement; and saw that in certain circles it was treason to surmise the possibility of a Regency.

That his own wishes and expectations pointed to a different conclusion, was nothing to the purpose. Frank was still under the charm of boyish courtiership. In the Prince—the well-dressed, well-mannered Prince, — he beheld a man of the world who had lived on a level below that lofty eminence of sovereignty where the mists of prejudice prevail, to the darkening of the royal eye. The Prince knew the wishes of the people as well as the law of the Lords. The Prince had gathered public opinions from all sides, instead of having but one ear open, after the fatal practice of royalty. The Prince was

personally familiar with the great spirits of the times; and a navy and an army catered for by his discrimination would doubtless boast commanders of a very different calibre from the obsolete school which had rendered Holland, Flushing, and Monte Video a by-word to the nations. The Prince would revive the perishing arts of peace while aiding to plume the conquests of war. The Prince would, in short, work miracles, and create a new Athens and a second Rome in the swelling heart of the British islands.

But it was not so much for the deeds he was to do as for the gratification of his single self, that Frank burned to behold his Royal Highness invested with the insignia of power. Frank truly and dearly loved him. The courteous demeanour, the well-attuned voice, the graciousness of nature, which even a courtly education had not sufficed to obliterate, had subjugated the young heart still subject to the impulses of its senses. Meanwhile, con-

cluding the feelings of his royal friend to be engrossed by the afflictions of his family, Frank accorded a silent sympathy, and felt almost ashamed of allowing his thoughts to stray to the ultimate result.

Such was the state of his mind, when one chilly morning, late in October, as he was about to sally forth from his lodgings to Brookes's, where he had an appointment with Sheridan, Frank Grenfell found his narrow hall in Bury-street obstructed by the portly figure of Lord Teviot, and was compelled to entreat his lordship would return with him to the drawing-room to complete his visit.

"I hope I am not preventing your going out," said the Earl, after drawing a long breath in the comfortable lounging-chair of the young bachelor; and Frank could only reply in the polite negative invariably bestowed in answer to such inquiries.

"The fact is, that being only in town for a few days, my dear sir, I was particularly

desirous of catching you," resumed the Earl. "I am returning to-morrow to Warkworth Abbey, and promised that unfortunate boy of mine I would take, or make, some opportunity of an interview with his friend, Mr. Grenfell."

Frank Grenfell smiled, bowed, and tried to look inquisitive instead of bored by his civilities.

"I need not reveal to a man of your penetration, my dear sir," resumed Lord Teviot, "that poor Warkworth's passion for your amiable sister remains unabated. On the first blush of the affair, I confess that my apprehensions of seeing him settle in life at so very early an age so far prejudiced my sentiments, that I was not particularly sorry when Miss Grenfell's decision against him proved the object of his affection to be more prudent than himself; but now, that his consistency and steadiness have demonstrated the fundamental nature of his attachment, my utmost anxieties point to a different result. I perceive that poor dear Warkworth is a miserable man for life,

unless the young lady should be induced to consider his suit more favourably; and I therefore throw myself upon your kind interpretation, my dear Mr. Grenfell, and even upon your good offices, to signify to your charming sister the earnest desire of my whole family to welcome her to its bosom as the bride of your old friend."

"Your lordship cannot for a moment doubt my admission that, in a pecuniary point of view, a match with Lord Warkworth far exceeds the pretensions of my sister," replied the astonished Grenfell with cold formality. "His lordship's proposals were rejected by Miss Grenfell wholly without my advice or knowledge. But we have since conversed together upon the subject; and, from the nature of her feelings, I am convinced she decided wisely, and that no possible change of circumstances could induce her to regard Lord Warkworth's application in a favourable point of view."

"You are a young man, my dear Mr. Gren-

fell!" cried Lord Teviot with a smile of indulgence. "You know nothing of the versatility of the female heart. A thousand trifles serve to influence a woman's choice, to which the judgment of our sex rises superior."

"I am acquainted with few men — of my own age, certainly none, — whose judgment is superior to Bessy's," cried Frank, jealous for his sister. "Her mind is so honest, and her conduct so thoroughly governed by her mind, that"—

"Pardon me if I interrupt you to observe that, in cases such as that under our consideration, young ladies' conduct is apt to be governed by their hearts," observed Lord Teviot, fancying that he was jocose as well as antithetical.

"I cannot rank my sister in the category of every-day young ladies," persisted Frank. "She is a person whose talents are as rare as her virtues. I can assure you, my lord,

that her rejection of Lord Warkworth was definitive."

"Not, I trust, as a natural consequence of her rare talents and virtues?" replied the Earl, wincing, but still affecting to smile. "However, we will not quarrel about terms. —I am too seriously bent upon obtaining such a daughter-in-law, to be diplomatically punctilious in the preliminaries. All I ask of you, my dear sir, (and, as a matter of courtesy, I have really a right to exact it,) is, that you will transmit the letter with which I have the honour of presenting you from Lord Warkworth, to Miss Grenfell's hands, and explain to her the deep respect with which I solicit her attention to the contents."

Still more and more amazed, Frank Grenfell had no alternative but to accept the letter. The only comfort in receiving it was the certainty that, having no further pretext to prolong his visit, Lord Teviot would relieve him from his presence.

The fussy Earl, however, was one of those who can contrive to make the resumption of their hat, cane, and gloves, a matter of time. His lordship came charged with that peculiarly Londonlike weapon of defence, an umbrella; and began twisting the cord and tassel round his finger with most provoking deliberation, while he inquired, "Any news from Windsor to-day?"

"Not that I am aware of. I was on my way to Brookes's when I had the honour of meeting your lordship."

Lord Teviot bowed and looked convinced, secretly convinced, that Frank had probably received a confidential missive from Carlton House previous to quitting his pillow.

"The accounts yesterday were not exactly what we could wish," resumed the Earl, with a shake of the head more significant than that of Lord Burleigh in the farce; while Frank, uncertain whether the pronoun were regally or collectively spoken, but certain that very few

things wished by Lord Teviot appeared desirable to himself, remained discreetly silent.

"Still, Halford gives us every reason to hope that the mischief may be a mere crisis?" continued his lordship; and it would have appeared strange that an affirmative proposition should be delivered in a tone of interrogation, had either the matter or manner of Lord Teviot's eloquence been at any moment susceptible of explanation.

"Sir Henry must doubtless be the best judge," replied Grenfell, making a rush at his own hat and gloves.

Lord Teviot shrugged his shoulders, but *not* at the uncivil impatience of his young host; for a moment afterwards he ejaculated in a subdued voice, "A solemn crisis, Mr. Grenfell; a *very* solemn crisis! The only comfort of the old and faithful servants of the King consists in the fact that his royal son has attained the energies and prudence of middle age; and that the kingdom committed to his

charge has consequently the prospect of a wise and happy government."

Having uttered thus much of the loyal sentiments with which he wished to charge the memory of Frank, (who, he doubted not, was proceeding to Brookes's only on his way to Carlton House,) Lord Teviot shook hands with his new or intended ally, and lo! the narrow stairs creaked under his departing steps.

"Matters must be worse than I fancied," mused Frank, as he prepared to follow in the same direction. "This worshipper of rising suns has doubtless obtained authentic intelligence that the sun is about to rise, to which he has just dedicated his homage. I must see Sheridan. At such a moment I should be sorry to intrude myself upon the Prince."

But even while adding a few comments of his own to Lord Warkworth's letter, for the envelope of which he intended to procure a frank at Brookes's,—another was placed in his

hands, franked and indited by no less a personage than the cautious and precautious Earl of Waterton.

"My dear Cousin!"—(was the courteous opening address of the head of the Grenfell clan, with whom, except in a few dry, unsociable visits, Frank had held little intercourse since their introduction; Lord Waterton having studiously acquainted him from the first, that the state of Lady Waterton's health did not admit of their giving dinner-parties.)—

"It has long been my desire to express to you what infinite pleasure Lady Waterton and myself would derive from welcoming you to our abode,—the abode of our mutual progenitors; and I now hasten to say that the sooner you visit us the greater will be the gratification of my whole family. Could you make it convenient to bring with you your charming sister, Lady Waterton would be inexpressibly obliged. We are only just re-

turned from the coast; as I make it a rule to pass September and October from home, on account of the inconvenience produced in the neighbourhood by the brigades of sportsmen who annually find their way into our county. We shall consequently have some capital pheasant-shooting to offer you, though the preserves of our neighbours are miserably thinned.

"With the united affectionate regards of my whole family, believe me to remain, my dear Grenfell,

"Your affectionate Cousin,

"WATERTON."

Unsuspicious of the immediate motive of the writer, who did not, like Lord Teviot, commit himself by allusions to Carlton House, Frank was nevertheless far from satisfied with the tardy civility of his kinsman.

"Had this man's hospitality been extended to my poor mother in her miserable widow-

hood," thought he, "or even to Bessy and myself when first thrown upon the mercy of those who wanted to make me a clerk in a city counting-house, how valuable I should have considered the notice of the head of my father's family! But it is too late. As a matter of affection, I feel no leaning towards the cold, shabby, old fellow; and as a matter of interest, thank God! his patronage is beneath my consideration. To-morrow I will despatch a polite apology; and inform him that his pheasants are in no danger from the attacks of his lordship's affectionate cousin, Francis Grenfell."

CHAPTER VII.

If ordinary beggars are whipped, beggars in fine clothes (out of respect to their quality) ought to be hanged.

SAVILLE.

To Hursley Park, meanwhile, the rumour of his Majesty's seizure had not at present reached. Like the Germans, Lady Mary Woodbridge was at once the greatest dreamer and the most matter-of-fact person on earth. Physically occupied by the homely concerns of her household, and morally by schemes of the wildest nature, the march of public events passed unobserved. She was as little acquainted with the state of the country she lived in, as with that of Krim Tartary.

She knew that her son was a borough-holder, that the Tories were in power,—and he might, if he chose, get a peerage in exchange for his boroughs; but whether these chafferers were to continue in power, or who was likely to succeed them, was an effort beyond her stretch of conjecture. Her present object was to plague poor Bessy Grenfell into marrying Lord Warkworth; in order that, according to Sir Robert Crewe's predictions, Sir Henry might become a resident at Hursley Park; and some idle day, when tired of home and his old mother, ride over to Raynham Lodge, propose to Miss Loveden, marry, settle, complete a negotiation with government, expand into Lord Hursley of Hursley, and (as the tale-books say) live very happy ever afterwards.

Meanwhile, all she knew of the disastrous plight of Windsor Castle was, that the poor dear King and Queen were about to lose one of their daughters; and with the dirty policy, which very rich people alone venture to ex-

hibit, had actually passed a morning at Swansborough, providing court mourning, to ensure her bombazine and lustring sixpence a yard cheaper by anticipation. Nay, so pleased was she with her own prudence, that she made it her boast when, on the Friday preceding the decease of the lamented Princess Amelia, Lady Raynham and Miss Loveden made their appearance at Hursley for a morning visit.

The weather was lugubrious, but the countenances of both ladies were resplendent; Lady Raynham's with courtesy, Julia Loveden's with joy. Bessy Grenfell, albeit little of a courtier, was shocked. She would have felt depressed by a recital of sorrow in the poorest family, similar to those which the newspapers of the day elaborately set forth as afflicting that of her sovereign; and was in no mood to enjoy the hilarity of their visitors. What right had Lady Raynham, the daughter and sister of courtiers of the servile Dundas era, to

be thus joyous when her benefactors were afflicted?

Lady Mary, however, had no such scruples. After expressing with her usual emphasis, how "deeply she sympathised in the troubles of her beloved King and his excellent Queen, and how indignant she felt against Jones of the High-street, who had actually profited by the occasion to charge her a shilling a yard for black love-ribbon, which, if she had been only commonly provident, she might have laid in last month for tenpence," she was quite ready to be comforted; to enjoy her luncheon of masked lobster and madeira, and accept with glee Lady Raynham's proposition that she and her niece should pass two days of the following week at Raynham Lodge.

"Now I have dear Lady Mary's answer," said Lady Raynham, setting down her biscuit and glass of toast-and-water, "I shall lose no time in writing to our friend Frank, and en-

treating him, if his engagements permit, to come and meet you."

Bessy, to whom this piece of neighbourly civility was addressed, replied by a look of unfeigned surprise. Since Lady Raynham's return from town, she had not breathed the name of Mr. Grenfell to his sister; and, in the utmost exuberance of intimacy, never dreamed of honouring him with so familiar an appellation as "Frank." From so dry a woman, such a symptom of familiarity was truly unaccountable.

"I am sure I shall be greatly astonished," cried Lady Mary, taking upon herself, amid the general silence, the duty of reply, "if my nephew should be able to break through his London engagements! As it has not been convenient to him to visit Hursley Park, I shall be no less hurt than amazed to find him accepting invitations to Raynham Lodge."

"Under the peculiar circumstances, I am

persuaded, my dear Lady Mary, you will show yourself a little indulgent," pleaded Lady Raynham with a sentimental air. "He was of course apprised that our dear Julia has been spending the last two months with her father, when he declined your invitations. Dr. Loveden only spared her back to us, you know, on Thursday last; and her uncle, with his usual kind consideration, gave his consent yesterday that Mr. Grenfell should actually be included in the invitation despatched to Hursley Park. As it is pleasant to be the bringer of good tidings, I preferred being myself the bearer of the invitation. Amid the general grief just now prevalent in the kingdom, it is pleasant to behold, at least, one cheerful countenance."

As Lady Raynham glanced at Miss Loveden in concluding her harangue, Lady Mary thought herself in civility bound to cast her eyes in the same direction; and her ladyship's remark, "Yes! I never saw Miss Julia look-

ing better. I suppose parsonage fare agrees with her better than the high living of Raynham Lodge," betrayed the exact extent to which Lady Raynham's explanations had been intelligible. Her ladyship's usual obtuseness stood her friend in preventing her being aware of the treachery meditated against her son: and Bessy, who was becoming gradually enlightened, thought it better to defer the explosion of wrath which she knew would follow a better understanding among the parties. She allowed Lady Raynham and her niece to depart; then listened in silence to Lady Mary's exclamations against their supposing it "possible that a young man of Frank Grenfell's pursuits would find it worth while to travel ninety miles for the pleasure of passing two days in a country-house, which, during the session of parliament, was quite as stupid as other country-houses;" and her declarations that "never had she seen Julia Loveden look-

ing so beautiful; that, if Harry could see her now, she was convinced Julia would be Lady Woodbridge before Christmas!"

Conscious of having produced so much mischief by her unadvised avowals to her brother concerning the preference of her friend, Bessy Grenfell resolved, on the present occasion, to leave matters unexplained till they were developed by the parties interested. But there was in truth no need for her to reply. Lady Mary's thoughts having been thus accidentally directed towards her son's absence from home, and its imputed origin, she was falling into her usual ill-humour with her niece.

"It's a very extraordinary thing, Bessy," cried she peevishly, "that you cannot think of giving orders to Anderson never to bring hyacinths into the drawing-room! I've told you a hundred thousand times what an excruciating headache they give me! At this very moment I declare I can hardly see out of my eyes."

"You told me yesterday, after the *jardi-*

nières were filled, to remind you, the first time you went to the forcing-houses, to speak to Anderson on the subject," replied Miss Grenfell mildly.

"You knew very well what I meant; and I must say it would have been no great trouble to you to have put on your bonnet and stepped to the gardens. But the perfume does not happen to disagree with you; you don't suffer from having hyacinths in the room; so I suppose we shall have nothing else all winter!"

Miss Grenfell replied by quietly lifting the single offending pot of hyacinths from the china vase, and removing it to the billiard-room, which Lady Mary never entered.

"Another time, pray leave these sort of menial occupations to the servants!" said her ladyship angrily. "I do not wish to have it reported all over the county by the Crewes and Beckfords, and the rest of them, that I *compel* my niece to take upon herself the duties of the footman."

"Surely, there is no reason why the Crewes and Beckfords should be aware that I once removed a flower-pot from one room to another," replied Bessy with a smile. "But be assured, my dear aunt, that were Sir Robert Crewe to report, and maintain it with even his stoutest 'upon my word and honour,' that I was ever compelled to duties unfit for a gentlewoman, no one would believe him. Unjust as the world is, people are aware that you require nothing of the kind, and that, if you did, you would require it in vain."

Bessy quitted the room as she spoke; in the first place, to avoid a retort likely to bring on an altercation; and, in the second, to muse over the singular hints let fall by Lady Raynham concerning her brother and Julia Loveden.

Could it be possible that they were really engaged? Was such the motive of Julia's embarrassment in her company since their return from town. Had Miss Loveden, aware

of her disapproval, left it to Frank to make the disclosure to Bessy, and interpreted her subsequent silence into tacit displeasure; had her brother — sensible of the absurdity of a man without fortune, without profession, without the perseverance and self-denial needful to succeed in a profession, pretending to a settlement in life, — dreaded to call forth the animadversions of his mild but firmly-spoken sister?

Bessy trembled to reflect upon it. If they were really engaged, and the Raynhams were mad enough to sanction the engagement, what would become of them both? — Frank with his five hundred a year, (in part dependent on his cousin's caprices,) and Julia with the interest of her five thousand pounds, — both volatile, expensive, and helpless, — both unaccustomed to self-denial or self-control! There was misery, — there was danger, — there was ruin in every point of the prospect!

She admitted that in Julia's nature there

was much that captivated her regard. Miss Loveden's beauty, sprightliness, and candour rendered her the very wife for Sir Henry Woodbridge of Hursley Park, who required only an agreeable and ornamental consort. But a Frank Grenfell, whose vocation was *to* toil on with moderate means to a moderate independence; who required a self-denying household helpmate to solace his dom*estic* evenings, and assist him in bearing onwards the burthen of life,—must be mad to dream of such a match! According to Bessy's view of the case, her brother might as well have walked into Rundell and Bridge's shop, and invested his whole fortune in a diamond shirt-pin!

That it would influence him to more honourable exertions to know that his future efforts were due to a wife and children, instead of loitering away his days in unmeaning gallantry in the perfumed boudoir of Lady Mary Russell, Bessy freely admitted; and hailed the fact of her brother's having formed a virtuous at-

tachment, as evidence that his intimacy with the fashionable Lady Mary was of as frivolous a nature as he had invariably asserted. But, with Frank's volatility of character, efforts and exertions were incompatible. He was at present unaware of the duties and responsibilities of a family man.

To address him on the subject, upon grounds so slight as her present conjectures, would be absurd. She would wait and judge for herself. If Frank made his appearance at Raynham Lodge, she would understand it as confirmation, and withhold neither from him nor Julia her candid opinion of their prospects.

Meanwhile, the change of politics in the Raynham family, which rendered Bessy so contemplative, was driving Frank Grenfell out of his wits for joy! From the moment of receiving Lady Raynham's invitation, with a postscript in his Julia's handwriting which bade him "hope," for that she trusted eventually to remove the objections of her family to her union,

November ceased to be November, and even a London fog grew *couleur de rose*. The sudden alteration of Lord Raynham's views for his beautiful niece the lover fondly attributed to the arguments of his beloved Julia. In July, he had been bidden "despair." The family would not hear of bestowing one of the loveliest girls in the kingdom, for whose hand the wealthy and noble had been suitors, upon a young man without the means of affording her a decent maintenance; and whose talents could not at present be taken into the account of his fortunes, since he was not yet called to the bar. He had been required to pledge himself to drop all correspondence with Miss Loveden, and his sole consolation in that parting hour consisted in Julia's promise that, betide what might, she would be faithful; for Frank Grenfell was at the age to place implicit reliance upon women's promises.

It was now clear that he was right; Julia had employed the time of his absence in conquer-

ing the opposition of her friends. She had succeeded. How was it possible for the lovely, bright, intelligent Julia to do otherwise than succeed? Lord Raynham's invitation to him to spend a few days at the Lodge was a mere preliminary to the happiest accommodation of their affairs. They were to be permitted to marry on their seven hundred and fifty pounds a year, *en attendant* the Pactolus which his professional labours were one day or other to direct across their course of life. How wisely, how kindly, had the Raynhams determined to accede to the wishes of two young people so devotedly attached that the intensity of their affection would suffice to conquer difficulties, and elevate them to the prosperities of life.

After despatching with eager gratitude an answer of acceptance into Hampshire, Grenfell was scarcely able to subdue his spirits during the rest of the day to the decent gravity becoming the sad topic of the hour. As he

walked up St. James's-street towards Hanover Square, after depositing his letter in the club-box, the joyous expression of his beaming eyes was accepted by many an observant lounger as a token that the intelligence from Windsor was unsatisfactory, and that the prospects of Carlton House were looking up.

Those numerous heroes of the middle age, who beguile their winter days in the metropolis by peering at idlers and hackney-coaches through certain panes of the windows of the Cocoa Tree, Arthur's, the Albion, and even the loftier "loopholes of retreat" belonging to White's, Boodle's, and Brookes's, (the three clubs which for so many years comprised the three estates of the constitution of fashion,) protested that the odds were twenty to one in favour of a Regency, for that Frank Grenfell was tripping up hill with the tiptoe pace of Diomed; and according to the colour of the club was the commentary on such a text.

Brookes's said least, because Brookes's knew

most. But among the Pittites (for there were Pittites on the earth in those days), and, still more, among the ex-official tribes, lists of new ministries were made out, bets made and registered, and the names of Grey, Grenville, Holland, and Moira exalted by promotion to office. Sheridan was to be President of the Board of Control or a junior Lord of the Treasury — no matter which or what; and Frank Grenfell Under-secretary of State.

CHAPTER VIII.

Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When our deep plots do pall.

SHAKSPEARE.

THUS babbled the world on topics concerning which (as usual when it babbles most) the world knew nothing. The intimate intentions of the Prince, if known to himself, reached no further than the charmed circle of a trio, which neither his Royal Highness's friends nor their political connections were allowed to penetrate; and were moreover too contingent upon the proceedings and exactions of others to be preconceivable on general principles. His Royal Highness took up a reserved post secure from friend or enemy.

It is amusing enough to observe, on occasion

of extraordinary public crises, the audacity with which certain London circles affect to be in familiar possession of mysteries transacted in the seclusion of the royal closet between the King and his Minister, — between a royal father and son, — or royal husband and wife. Be the event disgraceful to either party or both, so that policy as well as delicacy must impose a padlock on their lips, the coteries relate it with a stupidity of self-conceit truly diverting; as if a courier had been despatched to the West-end for the sole purpose of supplying its *on dits*, and the consequent "it is said" of the newspapers, with facts which the parties concerned would have bribed to silence at the cost of thousands of pounds.

That even the trivial incidents connected with the person of the sovereign are little whispered beyond the palace-gates, is evinced in the fact that, during the afflictions of the unfortunate George III, not a syllable tran-

spired to the public; not a word of vulgar tittle-tattle was to be purchased by newspaper proprietors eager to cater for the appetite of the multitude. One cause of this decent and praiseworthy silence perhaps arose from the unapproachability of the King by inquisitive "ladies-in-waiting;" but its effects were apparent in the contending rumours which agitated the political circles of London during the six weeks which followed the meeting of parliament on the first of November.

Where authentic information is wanting, men are apt to conjecture after the devices of their own hearts; and those who dreaded the measures of the Prince, were as prompt in believing that the lucid intervals of the King were settling into the perfect restoration of his reason, as the votaries of his Royal Highness were eager to circulate that the medical men had decided his Majesty's recovery to be impossible.

Recalled to town by their parliamentary

and official duties, Lord Teviot and his son were prompt in waiting upon their esteemed friend Mr. Grenfell; and, as their esteemed friend Mr. Grenfell had taken especial precautions that the pompous Earl should never again be admitted as a visitor to his lodgings, Frank was spared the encounter, till, on the eve of his departure for Hampshire, he chanced to encounter Lord Warkworth in the lobby of the House, whither he had accompanied Sheridan, who had quitted him for a few minutes' private conversation with Mr. Whitbread.

"My dear Grenfell, I have had the honour of calling repeatedly in Bury-street in the hope of seeing you," said his lordship, after forcibly shaking hands with his intended brother-in-law.

"I received your card, my lord: I was not aware that you had done me the favour to repeat your visit."

"More than once: yet I need not inform

you that at this juncture the time of public men is valuable."

"Is there anything in which you desire my services?" demanded Frank, concealing a smile.

"I am anxious, naturally anxious, for a reply to the letter I had the honour of submitting through your hands to Miss Grenfell."

"I forwarded it on the same day to Hursley Park."

"I conclude so," said Lord Warkworth stiffly.

"And has not my sister answered it?" demanded Frank in a careless tone.

His lordship replied by a stately negative wave of the head.

"Rely upon it, then, Bessy considers that, after Lord Teviot's ungracious treatment of her some months ago (which I learned accidentally from his lordship's recent admissions), she is exonerated from holding any further communication with the family."

"That, allow me to say, would be a somewhat summary mode of dealing with the question," replied Lord Warkworth, his countenance darkening.

"I speak from surmise. I have held no communication with my sister on the subject. It is some time since Bessy favoured me with a letter."

"But, under circumstances so urgent," resumed Lord Warkworth, "I have certainly a right to expect from her own hand an answer to my proposals?"

"May I inquire whether, in reply to your first proposition, my sister requested that her answer might be considered definitive?"

"Certainly. But the refusals of a young lady are to be regarded as the *nolo episcopari* of a priest. Miss Grenfell's rejection was evidently grounded upon her apprehensions that my father would never be brought to consent to the marriage. But, being now aware that Lord Teviot has generously consented to over-

look every obstacle and receive her as a daughter-in-law, I do not hesitate to say that I anticipate a very different result. Come, my dear Grenfell, come! be honest! Own that you have been trifling with my impatience. Admit that you are in possession of Miss Grenfell's favourable reply."

Frank felt himself growing angry, but a second impulse convinced him that it was waste of time to resent the stupidities of a blockhead, whose self-sufficiency had been cultivated as a virtue.

"I am not in the habit of lying, even in jest," said he; "I was quite in earnest in assuring your lordship that I leave my sister's decision untrammelled, and that I have *no* knowledge of the origin of her silence."

"I may consider myself privileged, then, to address further inquiries to Miss Grenfell?"

"Unquestionably. I will, if your lordship pleases, be myself the bearer of the letter; I

am going down to Hampshire to-morrow, to spend a few days with the Raynhams."

"With the Raynhams?" cried Lord Warkworth in unfeigned amazement. "I thought I had understood from Lord Raynham—I fancied I had heard from her ladyship—but if you are about to become a guest at the Lodge, I am doubtless mistaken."

It was now Frank Grenfell's turn to look surprised.

"May I take the liberty of asking you, my dear Mr. Grenfell," resumed his lordship, "whether you received your invitation specifically, and from the Raynhams themselves?"

"Specifically, and from the Raynhams themselves," replied Grenfell, amused at the consternation excited in Warkworth's mind by a circumstance so trivial as his reconciliation to a family with whom his intercourse had been for a moment interrupted.

"And, after all, Lord Raynham has actually invited you again to his house?"

"After all what?" demanded Frank abruptly.

"Oh! nothing; merely that it was currently reported—that is, it was certainly rumoured"—

"I should have scarcely fancied myself a person of sufficient consequence to occupy the rumours of society," said Frank proudly, "no matter whether uttered in a gracious or ungracious sense. But, should any friends of your lordship think it worth while to trouble themselves further on the subject, beg them to believe that I am welcomed to Lord Raynham's family with as little solicitation on my part, as my sister is courted into that of my Lord Teviot."

"I trust I have said nothing that can be construed into offence?" cried Lord Warkworth. "Be assured, my dear Grenfell, that nothing was ever further from my thoughts than to"—

"Hillo! explanations, retractations, and apologies,—yet ex-parliamentary?" cried Sheridan, who, having finished his private business, hastily joined them. "What false interpretation has this 'noble imp of fame' been putting upon your words?—and why do you ever utter words so loosely strung as to admit of a double meaning? You, my dear lord, who have your Lindley Murray and your Lexicons at your finger-tips,—you, the last of the philologists,—you, of whom I hear as good exclamation as of any man in the city, and, though I be but a poor man, am glad to hear it!—you cannot be in error. But whatever the blunder, or whoever the blunderer, let me entreat your indulgence for my soft-headed and soft-hearted young friend here; who is just now steeped to the lips in state affairs, and 'charged to bid any man stand in the Prince's name.'"

Lord Warkworth bowed stiffly, and tried

to look satisfied. Here, then, was absolute admission of his worst suspicions! An administration was already forming.

"The passing time," resumed Sheridan, glancing significantly at the embarrassed countenance of Frank, "is big with the fate of Cato and of Rome. Before next week, it seems, we shall have to congratulate Frank upon his promotion to—But '*poco palabras!*' as Pistol says: let us spare his blushes and our own congratulations till his preferment is delicately hinted in the gentle columns of the Morning Post."

With a sportive nod, which Frank Grenfell accompanied by a formal bow, they passed on, leaving Lord Warkworth planted on the spot. Attributing this elation of spirit to the certainty of place, rather than so petty a triumph as acceptance by the object of his affections, the aspirant to power stood breathless. Had he heard rightly? Was all settled?

"Farewell—a long farewell to all his greatness!"

It may be questioned, by the way, which experiences the bitterest pang on the downfall of his party,— the veteran who has grown mossy in his chair of office, and begun by force of routine to regard the revenues of government as his own ; or the stripling about to rush into the arena, in hopes to win golden opinions from all sorts of men, and treasures. The anguish of spirit with which Lord Warkworth considered that his maiden speech must, after all, proceed from the Opposition benches, brought beads upon his brow! Instead of being launched as a trim and gallant vessel, sails set and colours flying, he was to make his first exhibition on the political ocean as a wreck. Dull as he was, he appreciated the evil influence of appearing for the first time under a cloud! To assume an heroic attitude immediately after being kicked out, is a physical and moral impossibility. Time, which restores things to their equilibrium, sanctions the resumption of self-consequence. Time,

which "makes the mulberry-leaf brocade," would make the lump of clay which the Commons rejected, one of the polished corners of the Lords. But Lord Warkworth could not afford to wait. Two-and-twenty years had he been in training for the race; and now, when the course was cleared, the jockeys weighed, and the signal about to be given, to have it declared that he had been falsely entered and must not compete for the stakes, was almost too severe an aggrievement!

It is true, he had been beforehand with fortune. He had hedged off by projecting an alliance with the sister of one having "the Prince's ear." Whatever his father might be, he, Lord Warkworth, stood pledged to no party. His occasional votes said little, except that he was Lord Teviot's son; but in his own person he had been mute as a fish. Provided he could make matters sure—provided he could sell himself at a respectable price, why not attempt a bargain? Wise men sail

with the wind; and the pig-headed only swim against the tide.

Was not Lord Raynham already veering? Were not the eagles already gathering together? Had he not reason to infer that this mysterious pleasure party at Raynham Lodge, where parties were never assembled during session, was a got-up thing, — a prompter's shifting-room,—a pandemonium of political treachery? Had not Sheridan spoken as if invited? He could not quite determine, for he could never exactly comprehend the phraseology of Sheridan.

He half determined to ascertain the fact in person. To Lord Raynham's (as the eldest son of a Cabinet Minister) he had a general invitation; and, in Miss Grenfell's visit there, a plea to render it particular. Apologies would be readily made for a young lover, attracted by the presence of his lady-love beyond the exact line of demarcation traced out by etiquette; and there would be something glorious

in pouncing upon Lord Raynham in the midst of his intrigue, and detecting Dr. Faustus in the very signature of his villanous contract.

Meanwhile, each of Frank Grenfell's hours was marked by a fresh beam of sunshine. The spirits of Sheridan, stimulated by the excitement of hope, were re-indued with that grace of by-gone days, that matchless refinement of taste, which, like the Cupid of Hindoo mythology, tipped even his arrows with roses. His wit brightened, or rather, the desolating clouds of adversity disappearing for a moment, gave it in unmitigated brilliancy to view.

From the wild political rhapsodies in which in such moments he was apt to luxuriate, and which his eloquence rendered almost plausible, the wit at length tamed himself down to ordinary topics.

"What was that 'pyed ninny' saying in his own defence when I broke in upon you?" said he. "How had he sinned? What was he repenting?"

"Nothing, I hope; for he had just been renewing his proposals of marriage to my sister."

"Aha! Lord Warkworth a suitor to Miss Grenfell? A thriving wooer of course, as the heir to an estate of forty thousand a year."

"You would not say so if you knew my sister. A girl as high-minded as Jane de Montfort!"

"Pho, pho! don't talk to me of stage heroines as models for daily life. In the name of common sense, what can any woman desire more than precedence at the coronation, and bank-notes to curl her hair with, at the expense of a man whose conduct is never likely to cause her a pang?"

"It may cause her a blush, which, to a woman of feeling, is a greater evil. My dear Sheridan, conceive an eternal *tête-à-tête* with such a barrel-organ as Warkworth!"

"Had you said chamber-organ, your objection had been more valid. Barrel-organs

are played in the streets; and such is precisely the merit of your friend Warkworth. There would be no *tête-à-tête*—no grinding of the same dull tune. For six months in the year such a fellow belongs to public life; and it will not be his own or the Chancellor's fault if he does not contrive to make the six, twelve. That fellow is marked out for office. Lady Warkworth or the Countess of Teviot will be mistress of her own establishment while his lordship is busy with 'both their houses.' "

"That might content many women; but not the one I have the honour to call sister, whose heart and soul require more delicate handling," said Grenfell.

"A child of your own years, then, my dear boy," cried Sheridan. "Poor soul! how grievous to think that she will have flung away her fortunes ere she has sense to know their value! I prophesy to you, Grenfell, (and the seer is upon me to-day,) that Warkworth will live to become what that credulous booby, the

World, calls a great man. Dull, slow, pompous, methodical, equal to the business of the Treasury, not above it, he will eventually niche himself into some small official corner; and puff, blow, and expand till he makes it expand with him, and the space he occupies in the eye of the world passes for greatness! Add to this, that the mule is a good safe beast, free from vice, and not likely to endanger any one's safety by his caracolings!"

"I shall see my sister to-morrow, and will lay before her the opinions of so great a judge of human nature as Richard Brinsley Sheridan," said Frank; "but I doubt their efficacy."

"Leave it to me to plead in person Warkworth's cause. You have promised to present me, you know, to this peerless sister. When does she arrive?"

"Nay, it is I who am to arrive. I am going down to Raynham's to-morrow, where Lady Mary and my sister meet me."

"You are going down to Lord Raynham's at this juncture?"

"I am, as you may suppose, sorry to leave London at this juncture, particularly as you seem to be in want of me; but to have refused the proffered olive-branch, though the family appointed me to meet them in the Scilly islands, was out of the question."

"You deserve to be brained for even thinking of it!—on the contrary, I augur much from this coa——, this connection," said he, correcting himself ere the word "coalition" was pronounced. "Go down to Raynham Lodge. Do justice to the best claret in England. Make that time-serving caitiff put an enemy in his mouth to steal away his brains,—(such brains as they are!)—and be sure to write me word how the land lies and what these fellows would be at."

"Without pledging myself to quite so much," replied Frank, vexed by such a sugges-

tion, "I promise at least to write and let you know how I succeed in my wooing."

Little did poor Frank conjecture how indifferent to his companion was any other success than that of his political projects. His ambitions were struggling within him. Confident in the vast and varied resources of his own mind, he felt himself a match for the great crisis of the moment; and might fairly have addressed his young friend in the words of one who supplies words for all emergencies:

"What though the mast be now blown overboard,
The cable broke, the holding anchor lost,
And half our sailors swallow'd in the flood;
Yet, though unskilful, why not thou and I
For once allow'd the skilful pilot's charge?
We will not from the helm to sit and weep;
But keep our course, though the rough winds say no,
From shelves and rocks that threaten us with wreck."

CHAPTER IX.

How curious to contemplate two State Rooks,
Studious their nests to feather in a trice,
With all the necromantics of their art
Playing the game of faces on each other;
Making court sweetmeats of their latent gall,
In foolish hope to steal each other's trust—
Both cheating—both exulting—both deceiv'd!

YOUNG.

AMID the strife and hubbub of the metropolis, unless within the official boundaries, the distinctions of party are comparatively unfelt. Whigs and Tories dine, drink, argue, laugh and chat together, rendering their differences of opinion a matter of jest; and except under the excitement of any great crisis, such as emancipating Catholics or negroes, or equaliz-

ing the revenues of the priests of the lowly Christian vocation, even the political circles are as chequered of party men as a Speaker's levee.

But it is not so in a dull country neighbourhood. Amid purling brooks and green trees, the stirring energies of human nature become so irritable for want of exercise, that any pretext for dispute is willingly seized. Corn Bills or Poor Laws strike into the very marrow of country squires, who suffer themselves to be frothed up as passively as a chocolate-pot, by the mill of some malicious antagonist. The great political game of the kingdom is an excitement for their bets, if not an occupation for their brains; and they are rejoiced to have some pretext for squabbling with a factious neighbour, who has thwarted them on the bench, censured their quorum legislation, and sworn that, "in committing Joe Dobbs, my friend Clark committed himself."

The neighbourhood of Swansborough was perhaps a trifle less party-ridden than others,

There were no eminent rival factions to rend it in twain; no Capulets and Montagues,—Broughams and Lowthers,—or Wentworths and Lascelles. The borough was one which, till Sir William Beckford's disastrous fit of enthusiasm, no one had thought it prudent to contest; and the vast space occupied by the Woodbridge property seemed, during the *fainéant* reign of Lady Mary, to beget fogs of dullness and courtiership invading the face of the district.

Matters were however brightening, and Swansborough was pricking up its ears. Sir Henry Woodbridge, who was as sure of returning one of its members as of sitting for Dronington, or in his elbow-chair, whenever it suited him, had declared himself a Liberal; and the splenetic caprice of a boy was literally beginning to influence the opinions of thousands of rational beings. For in the days of anti-reform it was the opinions of members which controlled those of the electors, not those

of the electors which influenced their representatives.

Old Danston of Danston Grange, a thorough-going Hanoverian-succession, anti-emancipation, anti-abolition, anti-liberty-of-the-press Tory of the Pitt school, could almost have found it in his heart to disown his fellow-countymen, when he heard them huzzaing at the heels of Sir William Beckford as he rode through the market-place, or shouting in honour of the seditions of Sir Francis Burdett. The old gentleman beheld what he conceived to be an evil spirit arising in the land. His tenants began to read newspapers instead of Moore's almanack; to cry aloud against war, taxes, and bank currency, instead of against Swedes and Ruta Baga. Understanding that Swansborough was henceforward to be represented by a "people's man," they trusted they had found a mouthpiece for their discontents. For "there comes a time," saith Burke, "when men will not suffer bad things because their

ancestors have suffered worse, when the hoary head of inveterate abuse will neither draw reverence nor obtain protection."

Mr. Danston was deeply and disinterestedly concerned. He was no place or title hunter, but a conscientious Pittite. His principles were clearly his own, for he had inherited them with his estate; and he experienced as sincere an alarm at the change of public feeling in the neighbourhood, as if he had known it to be infected by the plague or yellow fever.

His first impulse was naturally to look about him for the support of allies; and it was a real affliction to find the good cause so inadequately supported. Appreciating with the full candour of an honest mind the dirty spirit of Raynham Lodge, the old squire knew that a poor Lord had married the rich sister of a Tory Minister; and that his object in affording to the administration and their hangers-on a share of the loaves and fishes baked in the

government oven, and secured in the Treasury net, was as little connected with political principle as with the changes of the moon. He saw in Lady Mary Woodbridge the daughter of a Scottish peer ennobled by Lord Bute, and desirous that Mr. Perceval should ennoble her son; but caring less for the safety of the crown and constitution than for that of her silver thimble. He beheld in Sir Robert Crewe a cringer at levees, who would be as well content to kiss hands for pensions or crosses of King People as of King George. There was not, in short, a single landed proprietor in the district on whom he could rely to assist him in building up dikes and closing sluice-gates against the over-flooding spirit of innovation.

The only man of really gentlemanly spirit within reach was Sir William Beckford, who had espoused, though with the moderation of a feeble character, the opposite side; and the gallant old Tory felt almost as much mortified

that he had no antagonist worthy his lance, as that his coadjutors were so little to be trusted.

To him the affliction of the sovereign, of whom he was almost the contemporary, was a personal sorrow; from him the changes consequent on such an event commanded a truly patriotic sympathy: but the old gentleman, though sad at heart, scorned to give outward token of his grief. To borrow a beautiful simile from Sir Philip Sidney, he "wore in affliction a countenance prouder than his wont; the temper of the highest hearts being, like the palm-tree, to strive upwards when most burthened."

Anxious to learn more of the events passing in Windsor and London than was to be gathered from the partial statements of the newspapers, he determined to betake himself to Oak Hill for information. The Baronet was a gentleman. From him, at least, truth was to be learned. He should be able to prepare

himself for the worst, on hearing from Sir William Beckford that his beloved King was irrecoverably gone and the Regency Bill safe. Mounting his favourite shooting pony, he soon ambled through the park-gates.

The first object that struck him was Sir William, sauntering along a cross-way of the park, with his hands in the pockets of his shooting jacket, and a dolorous expression of countenance.

"Ha! my dear Danston!—delighted to see you!" cried he, coming up with the pony. "All well at home — eh? — rheumatism? — sorry to hear it; but this deuced weather puts everybody out of their way."

The matter-of-fact old squire was about to enter upon the vindication of the weather, which had done the civil thing for him to a fine crop of Danston oats, concerning which he was meditating an article in the "Agricultural Magazine;" but Sir William hastily persisted with "I swear I find it quite de-

pressing! If the thing goes on, I must really try Brighton; for I begin to fancy the air of Oak Hill don't agree with me."

"To fancy, indeed!" replied the squire gravely. "Believe me, I never saw you look better."

"Indeed! yet I assure you I am devilishly hypped! I can't make myself out. I've just had a letter from my son, telling me it is impossible to get leave, on account of the disturbed state of the Southern district; and I really counted upon having John here this winter. There's not a soul hereabouts I can take a day's shooting with. Last year I had young Woodbridge, who is an amazing pleasant, easy, young fellow; and your boys used to come and meet him. But 'tis several weeks since either Richard or Mark were at Oak Hill. What's become of them?"

"Mark is in Leicestershire, staying with his old friend Jack Hartwell, whose quarters

you know are within reach of Melton. But Dick is at home."

"Why don't he come and see us oftener?"

"I never answer for my sons. However, I have a shrewd guess of the cause that keeps him away. Dick is not over and above fond of foreigners. He had a bit of kindness, poor fellow! for Miss Mary, a year or two ago; and frankly owned to me that he was afraid of having so musical a wife."

"I guessed as much. For once, old Crewe was right! I am convinced all that tootle-tooing, which Lady Beckford was so proud of, has been the ruin of the girls' prospects. How could I be such an ass as not to see that it drove every one from my house!"

"Not every one! I understand that your house was always overflowing."

"Yes: with what? Scrapers and adventurers! No one worth preserving as an ac-

quaintance could bear the style of the thing. As I repeat to Lady Beckford every day of my life, we may boast of having lived, both at Brighton and in town, surrounded by the worst company ever collected together by a respectable family."

"If you say as much to Lady Beckford every day of your life, I am no longer surprised, my dear sir, at your looking hypped."

"Would you have had me allow it to go on till we had rendered ourselves the talk of the town? No, no! on quitting London this spring, I took a final leave of every tweedledum of my acquaintance, and desired that not a note of music might be heard for the future on my establishment after twelve o'clock in the day, in order that my visitors at least may be spared being strummed out of their patience."

"I have heard of such a thing as mistaking reverse of wrong for right," said Mr. Danston gravely. "Take care you don't drive the

girls out of the house in search of their favourite pursuit."

"I admit," replied the perplexed father, "that they are no longer the same cheerful happy creatures as formerly. They don't seem to know how to pass away their time; and their mother begins to complain of qualities in all three which I never heard alluded to before. I 'm afraid we have ourselves to blame for having allowed them to waste their best days in the cultivation of an empty sound! But 'tis too late now!"

"May I ask," said Mr. Danston, who perhaps thought he had enough of family grievances, "whether you have news from town?"

"To-day, nothing of any moment. But Sir Robert Crewe heard yesterday from a relation of his who is groom-in-waiting at Windsor Castle, that"—

"I don't ask you what Sir Robert Crewe heard. I would not give much for his cor-

respondents of any class; and should prize the intelligence of a newspaper reporter beyond that of one of the household treacherous enough to circulate his observations upon a trust so sacred. But what is the opinion in town? Will the bill pass?"

"With restrictions."

"Of course."

"Why, between ourselves, many people think restrictions much less needed now than in 1789."

"Human nature is what it was in eighty-nine."

"The Prince is supposed to be more in the hands of his household than of his party; or rather, he is supposed to have no party. On all occasions, of late years, his Royal Highness has disclaimed being a party man."

"Royal Highnesses cannot avoid being party men. Their being is too intimately involved in the well-being of the country to admit of neutrality. Louis XVI. might just as well

have proclaimed himself no party man to the assembling of the States General, as the Prince of Wales now."

"Well, he shall be a party man if you like; and, if my wishes go for anything, as staunch a Whig as old Fitzwilliam or Lord Grey. But I confess I don't like Raynham's saucy looks. I met him on the London road yesterday; and he would not be coming down to the Lodge just now, unless matters were safe for his party."

"*His* party! Now Raynham, I grant you, is no party man: he is a minister's man. I know no fellow on earth more likely to rat than Raynham."

"Come, come! you know 'tis a fundamental feature of Toryism to support each other *quand même*— Leave all the harm you want to have said of Raynham to me, who hate the very sight of him. But here we are! Won't you come in and ask Lady Beckford how she does?"

"I will go in and tell her that her husband is in twenty degrees better spirits than when I met him ten minutes ago."

Though prepared, by Sir William's account, to find some alteration in the aspect of the family, of whom the pleasant good-humoured girls were the squire's favourites of old, he was nevertheless startled by the profound silence that greeted him on entering the drawing-room, whence the sounds of mirth and music were accustomed to emanate. In one corner sat Sylvia, ensconced behind a vast embroidery frame; Selina was engaged on an opposite sofa, holding in her hands a heavy volume of "Russell's History of Modern Europe;" while Mary sat before a drawing-table, wearying over a study from the antique. All three raised their eyes when the door opened; but they had lost the spirit of gladness to welcome a guest. No one came now to talk to them of Haydn's new symphony, Paers's new opera, Catalani's latest achievement, or Tramezzani's

break-down. They were ignorant of all that was passing in the world (of music), — too sadly behindhand to attempt keeping up a conversation. They took note of nothing, since the old score was interdicted.

To the squire's inquiries after Lady Beckford, they replied, that if he wished to see her, one of them would proceed to mamma's dressing-room and acquaint her he was there. They did not think it necessary to inform him that, since there was no more practising to be over-watched or new music enjoyed, Lady Beckford had ceased to pass the morning with her grumbling yawning girls. Sir William, however, was already gone in search of his wife; and Mary did the honours in his absence. Her first impulse was to make inquiries after her old playfellows of the Grange, more especially after the intended bride of the eldest son, Henry Danston, who was on the eve of marriage with a distant kinswoman of his father's name.

"Is the match to take place soon?" said she in a pitiful voice.

"Immediately. The young people are to spend Christmas with us at the Grange."

"I am very glad to hear it. A new neighbour of our own age will be such an acquisition! Bessy Grenfell is almost lost to us on account of Lady Mary's whims and caprices. Besides, we never got on very well together. We are not bookish, and she is not musical."

"Not musical, perhaps; but I never saw a more prudent or better informed young person."

"Certainly. We like her very much; but, as Sir Henry Woodbridge always said, she is so cold and reserved! You explain it at once, my dear Mr. Danston, by calling her 'young person,' instead of 'girl.' There is nothing girlish in Bessy."

"There is a great deal that is womanly,—a great deal that does honour to her sex."

"Does Mrs. Henry Danston play or sing?"

inquired Mary Beckford in an undertone, looking round at the door, as if apprehensive of her father's re-appearance.

"My daughter-in-law? I never inquired—I suspect not. At all events, Henry has made no boast of the accomplishment. They are to reside as much as possible at the Grange; and my son is wise enough to conclude that, at his father and mother's time of life, it would not be particularly acceptable to have too much music."

Mary Beckford coloured deeply. A light broke in upon her mind. Conscious of having been at one time an object of predilection to her old playfellow John Danston, a young man of the most amiable qualities, she had noticed with surprise and regret his absence from Oak Hill, and vainly inquired of herself by what offence she had suddenly forfeited his good opinion. She now perceived that a wife whose heart and soul were devoted to a single pursuit, —a pursuit incompatible with the quiet habits

of Danston Grange, had been judged an unadvisable addition to the family.

While poor Mary sat meditating upon her ill-fortune, Sylvia began bewailing to Mr. Danston their disappointment in not seeing their brother.

"John is detained in Ireland by a ridiculous government circular, about the state of the country," said she peevishly. "As if John could be of the least use in reducing an Irish rebellion!"

"He will do his part. Let every officer of every regiment do as much, and the object of government will be answered."

"I don't think he would have been missed," persisted Sylvia.

"Nor I!" said the old gentleman drily; "but the indulgence extended to him must have been extended to others."

"It certainly would have been a great relief to have my brother here just now," sighed Selina, "Oak Hill is grown so very dull! I

had no idea till lately how stupid the country could be. I am sure John would have set everything to rights. John has so much influence with papa. We should have had all our old pleasant parties again, and"—

—" Six hours of music a day," interrupted the old gentleman. " Be satisfied, my dear young lady, that, for your own sake, as well as for the safety of the Irish gentry and clergy, your brother is better at Tipperary."

While old Danston was trying to restore harmony to the once happy household, now " jangled and out of tune," through the intermeddling of Sir Robert Crewe, Frank Grenfell, the happiest of mankind, was on his road to Raynham Lodge. His sanguine spirit had now some plea for its elation. Courted back by those by whom he had been rejected, welcomed by one who in his darker days had proved both partial and faithful, he saw in the auspicious promise of his own fortunes full justification for meeting half way the advances

which were to burthen him with the cares of a family. Encouraged alike by the counsels of Sheridan, and the hints held out by the Prince of bringing him forward in parliament, he saw before him a brilliant public career, cheered by the solace of domestic affections. He saw with the eyes of youth, through which from time immemorial human nature has gazed; overlooking the black gulf of disappointment at his feet, into which so many of the heedless are decoyed by such optical deceptions. He felt with the heart of youth, expanding with a thousand honourable and generous emotions, and unsuspicious of the pain and anguish awaiting it in a subsequent collapse. He was happy, for he was deceived. Alas! that such blissful illusions should be predestined to extinction by the harsher realities of life.

At the very threshold of the Lodge he was warmly received by Lord and Lady Raynham. "They could not do too much honour to the young friend whom their over-solicitous regard

for their dear Julia had induced them to treat with less deference than under any other circumstance was the due of Mr. Francis Grenfell."

Julia Loveden peeped archly over her uncle's shoulder, shrugging her own at this gratuitous hypocrisy; but, as she extended her hand as affectionately as ever to Frank, he could readily forgive her contempt towards the exaggerated courtesies of which he found himself the object. Enraptured to be once more in her presence, he could not withdraw his eyes from the lovely face on which country air had exercised so happy an influence. Julia had left London, looking thin and harassed; she was now radiant with health and beauty.

"You give me no reason to flatter myself that my absence has been regretted," he whispered, as they crossed the hall together towards the sitting-rooms; "I never saw you look so well."

"I have been at home, remember, in peace

and quietness with my father, safe from the fretful atmosphere of politics and politicians. Even before the recent changes, I had almost persuaded him to let me be happy in my own way. My father fancied himself under vast obligations to Lord Raynham for allowing his sister to marry a country parson, and has always allowed my uncle's opinion to exercise undue influence in his family affairs. Still, the temptation of seeing one out of his three daughters united to a man who sought her for herself, and not as a mounting-stone to preferment, was almost too great a temptation to his honest heart. He is prepared to love you much better than the Dean, or Sir William Rowe."

To this implied expectation of their approaching marriage, Frank could only reply by a tender pressure of the hand; and, as they were now at the door of the library, she delayed him a moment on the threshold.

"Prepare yourself for a drawback upon your happiness," said she.

"No very cruel one, I am sure, or you would not retain that heavenly smile."

"Every day must have its night,
And every sweet its sour,"

rejoined Miss Loveden. "You and I are very happy people this said Saturday; but, alas! till Monday morning we are to be burthened with the drawback of Lord Teviot's society. He came here, expecting (as he says) to meet Lady Mary and your sister, who, by the way, were not even invited till Monday, when his lordship and my uncle must be back to their duties."

"It is my fault, dearest! I plead guilty. Lady Raynham's letter mentioned to me, and I to Lord Warkworth, that Bessy would be here to-day."

"Then you will only pay the penalty of your indiscretion! But though Lord Teviot

protests that his object is to push his son's suit with your sister, I am convinced his real motive is to play the spy upon my uncle. I have lived too long among these people not to have some insight into their manœuvres. The scene between Peachum and Lockit, you know, was a mere copy of a squabble in a ministerial closet."

"But why should your uncle and Lord Teviot fall out?"

"Perhaps because each suspects the other of falling *in* with the enemy. Be on your guard. Dearly as I love you, Frank, I would not have our marriage made the seal of an act of treachery. If you watch them closely, you will perceive that the coadjutors are labouring to overreach each other."

CHAPTER X.

What have you gotten by being so long a customer to the world but false ware, suitable to the shop of a merchant whose traffic is toil,—whose wealth, trash,—whose gain, misery?

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

DEEPLY engrossed by the pleasant task of sunning himself in the smiles of his Julia, Frank Grenfell soon forgot to take heed of such trivial things as intrigues of state, and gave little attention to what was passing between the Earl of Teviot and his noble host. It might otherwise have tickled his lively fancy to perceive with what effort they babbled of green fields and prattled of things indifferent, in order to mask their anxieties and their

designs. All the arts displayed by the peewit to decoy the traveller from the spot containing its nest, did they attempt to distract each other's attention from their plots.

They belauded the works of the day: Crabbe's "Borough," which they had not sense really to admire, and Scott's "Lady of the Lake," which they had not taste to appreciate; and (little foreseeing a future laureate in Southey) waxed jocose concerning the wildness or bewilderment of "Kehama." The inundations on the coasts of Lincolnshire and Devon were next as seriously deplored as if the estates of the two noble mountebanks lay in maritime counties; the ticklish subject of politics was, in short, evaded with a dexterity equal to the sleight of hand of some conjurer at Bartholomew Fair.

More than once did Miss Loveden and her admirer, by cutting indiscreetly into the conversation, and hazarding the introduction of other topics of the moment, approach fright-

fully near the powder-magazine from which the cunning elders were standing aloof.

"As I passed through Hounslow this morning, I saw Guiche changing horses as if in a desperate hurry," observed Frank. "I had not time to ask him where he was going. By the way, I dare say the Duke was bearing to the royal family intelligence of the death of the Comtesse de Lille."

"Is the Queen dead?" demanded Lord Raynham, with some emphasis on the word.

"She died yesterday," replied Grenfell, discreetly avoiding a repetition of his offence.

"That might make a singular change in the prospects of the Duke and Duchess of Angoulême," observed Lord Teviot. "Louis XVIII. is of an age and disposition to marry again. I confess I should be sorry to see the direct line of Louis XVI. cut out."

"Cut out of what?" coolly demanded Julia. "What can it signify to the Duchesse d'Angoulême to have half a dozen little cou-

sins? As she is likely to have no family of her own, it would serve to render Hartwell less dull."

"You hold at a very cheap rate, then, the Bourbons' prospect of restoration to the throne of France?" inquired Frank of his fair friend.

"Restoration?" demanded Miss Loveden in amazement. "Why, surely even they have ceased to dream of such a thing. With Napoleon master of half Europe, and by force of treaties or bayonets striking terror into the other half,— with Rome and Hamburgh mayoralties of his kingdom, and the head (or tail) of the Holy Roman empire for his father-in-law!—Restoration!—You might as well talk of crowning Cardinal York at Westminster as Henry IX. Dei gratiâ Rex!"

"Apropos to deposed sovereigns," resumed young Grenfell with the same rambling indiscretion, "the ex-King of Sweden,—Gustavus Gustafson, Count Gottorp, or whatever we

are to call him, — landed two nights ago at Yarmouth."

"I fancied his Majesty had embarked for America," interrupted Lord Teviot in some surprise.

"In the Baltic he fell in with the Ruby, and judged it better to place himself under the protection of the British flag."

"Which is pretty nearly the only refuge left in Europe for dethroned kings!" interrupted Julia.

"It may not be long before even we find it unsafe to harbour princes rejected by their own subjects," observed Frank. "It is really a somewhat costly piece of Quixotism that we are to fight every king's battles as well as our own."

Lord Teviot's and Lord Raynham's eyes met, and would have struck fire, had they not been clouded by the influence of half a dozen glasses of sherry and madeira. They longed

to fight their own battle, and the King's, and the King of Sweden's. But policy prevailed; and they kept silence, yea, even from good words.

Frank, who perceived that his random shot had given pain or offence, honoured the two virulent Tories for their forbearance in not making such a text the origin of a rattling discourse; and by way of atonement observed in return, "On one head I readily join with the Swedes in reprobating the ex-King of Sweden. He was so fortunate as to have a charming wife, and failed to make her happy. 'That,' as Othello says, 'was a fault.'"

Again the two Lords interchanged glances. Convinced that, by an allusion so immediately pointing at the position of his royal master, Frank intended to pump them touching their views of the Princess-of-Wales question, each felt himself to be on the edge of a precipice. The world was by this time fully convinced that no party would obtain permanent posses-

sion of his Royal Highness but such as pledged itself to relieve him from the burthen of a wife not only hateful to himself, but rendering him, as he conceived, hateful in the eyes of the world. Both Lord Teviot and the Tory satellite had made up their minds in secret to give up the Princess in case they should be so fortunate as to enter into negotiations with the Regent; and, as this would be a notable plea of recommendation, each was eager to screen his resolve from his brother Judas.

"If a fault, it is by no means a rare one," observed Lord Raynham, adverting to certain memorable cases which had recently occupied the bigwigs of Doctors' Commons.

"It would be no recommendation to his Majesty the King of Sweden," observed Lady Raynham, (who had been busy weighing out the portion of bread and vegetables she allowed herself for dinner,) "that the family of his wife has chosen to debase itself by alliance with the usurper. The brother of the

ex-Queen of Sweden, remember, has allied himself with the step-niece of Buonaparte !"

"I don't suppose there was much choice left the Grand Duke of Baden," cried Frank hastily. "'The hand of the Princess Stephanie, or *mediatization!*' was probably the cry. Wives and treaties imposed per force of a hundred thousand bayonets, are past praying against."

"Still, a marriage with Stephanie Beauharnois will have the dreadful effect of excluding his offspring from the succession. At some future day Europe will naturally rise and annul such marriages, and disavow such connections: a painful position for the Baden family, and, among them, for the ex-Queen of Sweden."

"Well, if ever the day should come when crowned sovereigns attempt to dishonour the anchors to which they clung for succour in the tempest, I shall have a worse opinion of them

than even now, when they have neither strength to maintain their places, nor fortitude to bear their fall," replied Grenfell.

All were silent. After the explosion of a shell, people recover only to look wildly around, and ascertain who has been most injured by the accident. Lady Raynham was about to reply. As the least pot, she was soonest hot; and, as the weaker vessel, least stored in self-governance. But a glance from her lord and master restrained her; a glance that plainly said (to her eye only,) "if you have hopes to see me included in any approaching coalition, don't affront Frank Grenfell!"

But, alas! Frank was again on his legs, and again propounding a question likely to promote discord.

"May I ask," he was demanding of Lord Teviot, "whether it was by order of government that the search occurred the other day in

the vaults of St. Mary's in Aldermanbury, which brought to light the remains of the famous Jeffreys?"

"Government has its hands too busy, my dear sir, to trouble itself with groping for the bones of defunct Chancellors, famous or infamous," replied Lord Teviot. "I have the satisfaction of assuring my right—that is, my neighbour to the left," amended his lordship, recalling to mind, in spite of several more glasses of madeira, that he was not called upon for information from the Treasury Bench by some factious Opposition peer. "I fancy the said church in Aldermanbury is under repair; and the rogues of bricklayers"—

—"Like other rogues whom we might name, were indulging their lawless love of experiment at the risk of sapping the foundations of the church," cried Lady Raynham.

"Was the coffin properly authenticated?" demanded Lord Raynham, affecting antiqua-

rian zeal, in hopes to repair the rash injury of his wife.

"Yes; the plate and coffin, and those of Jeffreys' son and daughter, in the family vault, bore distinct inscriptions. The public were admitted to inspect them, as to view St. Paul's, Westminster Abbey, the wax-work, and other national monuments, at so much per head; and after they had paid their twopences, and expressed their wonder that Satan allowed so much of his faithful minister to remain on earth, went home no wiser than they came."

"It may be doubted whether many public men of modern times will fetch so much as twopence a head if made a spectacle in their coffins two centuries hence," observed Lord Raynham jocosely, by way of breaking through the awkward pause that followed. "It is a lamentable thing to consider how little difference there is to the living individual

between fame and notoriety; and how much less to the dead, between fame and infamy. The well-thinking man," he continued, calling up as nearly as he could into his countenance one of the pathetic physiognomies of Lord Eldon, "must content himself with the consciousness of rectitude."

Julia Loveden could scarcely refrain from shrugging up her shoulders, as when witnessing his lordship's hypocrisy on welcoming Frank as the stranger within his gates. But, fortunately, Lady Raynham gave the signal for coffee; and, when they all met again in the drawing-room, the party amused themselves with a few new caricatures,—a poor indication of the last flashes of wit of Gillray,—and a recent volume of poems by Montgomery, brought down by Frank as a gentle tribute to his gentle lady-love. Julia Loveden thought herself fortunate that they separated for the night without any previous disunion having occurred between the party.

The Sabbath passed as it was often passed, in those days, in mansions of the quality of Raynham Lodge. Among persons of Lady Raynham's description, the word "example" is a word of prodigious import. Her ladyship was in the habit of announcing to her guests on Saturday nights, that she should consider it a favour if they made a punctual appearance at the breakfast-table on Sunday morning; as, "for example's sake," she was desirous that her whole establishment, as well as her whole family, should appear at the parish church for morning service. She seemed to fancy that if a single individual in brown broadcloth and scarlet plush were missing from the gallery of All Saints', Dronington, she was responsible to the parish for his having remained behind to wash up the china and burnish the plate; the loss of spiritual instruction experienced by the slave in livery not being for a moment taken into account.

After a prodigious deal of shuffling and

arrangement to cram the party into a chario and a phaeton, in order that two coachmen two footmen, and an outrider might be mad to toil on the Sabbath, in addition to tv pair of horses and a-half, the Raynham Lod party arrived, " for example's sake," in t midst of the Psalms, and hid their blushes wi in the cautious curtains environing the sta family pew, either to screen the devotion Christians who humble their knees on hass of crimson velvet, or to screen, " for exam sake," from the congregation, the heavy s bers of my Lord Raynham, after his l breakfast of ham, chicken, and chocolate.

" For example's sake," meanwhile, her ship was so loud in her responses thr out the Litany, that, though still cc ably dozing, it was impossible for hi ship to sleep hard enough to disturb t gregation. " For example's sake " sl with the singing gallery; " for example" rehearsed the Communion service loud

the clergyman; and finally, "for example's sake," was the first to sail out of church after the sermon, acknowledging in detail, amid the murmured applauses of all present, the bobs of the fifty charity children, against whose harsh serge her ladyship's silks and satins brushed contemptuously as she sailed along the aisle towards the church-porch.

"For example's sake," her noble guests, whom their extraordinary exercises seemed to have endowed with a prodigious appetite, were, on their arrival at home, requested to content themselves piously with a cold collation; though as the man-cook, a Frenchman and Catholic, had enjoyed no opportunity of performing his devotions for the day, he might have been as conveniently occupied in dressing hot dishes as in elaborately garnishing cold ones: after which, "for example's sake," Lady Raynham, instead of ordering out her equipage for her daily drive, sank into a Sabbatical snooze, leaving her fashionable

visitors to wander through the gardens a
park, or make an uproarious descent up
the village.

In the evening, the curate of Droningt
after performing two laborious services,
burying, christening, churching, or marr
the good folks whom the non-residency of
Raynham's noble brother, the Dean, assi
to his pastorship, was expected to mak
appearance at the Lodge to tea, in order
at a signal from the house-bell at ten o'
my lord, my lady, and their guests,
sail into the dining-room, (still highly fl
ed with French dishes and French
round which were stationed the sevente
mestics of the family, from the portly
keeper down to the slender dairy-m
whom, "for example's sake," Mr. Rul
about to read family prayers in pres
the noble family of Raynham.

This ostentatious exhibition of Ch
ness, so much akin to the annual wa

from that act of sincere no-no-to humility

beggars' feet by the imperial family at Vienna, would have provoked a smile from Frank Grenfell, but that, on glancing towards Miss Loveden, he perceived that she at least was perfectly in earnest: the decent habits of her father's pastoral house sealed her eyes against all notice of the hollow pretences to sanctity around her.

On the morrow, immediately after breakfast, Lord Raynham and Lord Teviot were to return to town, the latter having to attend officially that night at Windsor the funeral of the lamented Princess Amelia; and Frank thought it advisable, ere his lordship's departure, to request a private interview in the library, for mutual explanation. But explanation was a thing that, either in his place in parliament or elsewhere, Lord Raynham detested. He entreated Frank, in an offhand manner, to "confer with his family before he entered into particulars with that of Miss Loveden. He had not seen Lady Mary since

his engagement. He had not communicat with Sir Henry. His personal prospects mi be on the eve of a great vicissitude: it wo be better to wait." As Lord Raynham served, (in a prodigious hurry, while chariot-and-four that was to convey Cæsar Antony to town was rattling up to the door,) "there would be quite time whe returned on the following Saturday to pr to the details of income and settlements, in the interval his young friend's engage at Carlton House were such as to rend pedient his appearance in London."

CHAPTER XI.

A propensity to hope and joy, is riches ; one to fear and sorrow, is poverty. HUME.

Of all the lunacies and oversights afflicting human nature, none is more worthy of indulgence than the wilful self-delusion inducing two young persons, mutually attached and unversed in the ways of the world, to fancy that difficulties disappear before the courage and patience of those who find in mutual affection a consolation for vulgar privations.

Vain are the sermons of experience ; vain the examples cited for their enlightenment. "Unexampled is the love which places their position above all comparison. Their fortitude defies misfortune ; their reliance on each

other supersedes all necessity for reliance
the world."

Julia Loveden had in truth never so m
as cast her eyes upon poverty, save in
character of a benefactress. Reared in
comfort and abundance of an old-fashi
parsonage, where no imprudence, no Lo
excursions, or costly entertainments encr
ed upon the Reverend Doctor's well-paic
thousand per annum, her visits to Ray
Lodge had familiarized her with only
fairer section of the sunny side of the
Though the improvident selfishness of th
tor prevented his bestowing upon his
ters more than five thousand pounds
while Lord Raynham out of his
estate had not a guinea for nephews or
Julia had enjoyed, by way of pocket-
all that she was to carry with her to
band; and the comforts and luxuri
nobleman's establishment had been
without consideration.

Yet, sprightly and intelligent as she was, the poor girl persuaded herself that, in commencing housekeeping on less than eight hundred a year, she should experience no privations. For Frank and herself, so small an establishment would suffice! Both Frank and herself, having tasted in their utmost refinement the enjoyments of wealth, pronounced them to be altogether vanity. Parade wearied them; pomp excited their contempt. "In their own hearts' most sweet society" they possessed a mine of comfort beyond the attainment of greatness, nor to be shaken by the fall of stocks or declension of dynasties."

Thus argued the young, healthy, happy, worshipped Julia Loveden, who had never witnessed the peevishness of a necessitous house, — never experienced the humiliation of an unpaid bill, — never struggled with the anguish of looking on a sick husband or ailing children, without the means of providing them the comforts due to sickness. In her flimsy artificial

view of existence, poverty was a midnig spectre, feared and talked of — rarely see a name kept to adorn charity sermons and speeches of Irish patriots. The word had more terror for her deluded ear than tha anthropophagus. She was not born to s from its influence!

The illusions of Frank, if of a different, not of a less fatal nature. Though h witnessed in early life the miseries of adv he confided in himself, in his powers, star, to surmount such petty difficulties overclouded the days of his mother. such burthens, a woman sinks at onc man creates his own destinies; and resolved that his should wear a cor to his liking. From the moment o tainment of manhood, all had pros him. On every side he had made fri every side had conquered protectors. needed for him to stretch out his

pluck the fairy fruit of gold and jewels suspended over his head, to eat and be filled.

It did not occur, however, to Frank, that he had in fact entered life as a dependent upon his wealthy cousin; that he had been courted by many on supposition of being in actual possession of the means for which he was indebted to the munificence of another. He had been educated and launched into the world as a man of fortune; and even those who cared not a rush about the amount of his income, sought and prized him for his agreeability as an idle man about town, whose time and talents were at their disposal. But a Lady Mary Russell, who had courted him as her humble servant, and the Prince as his humble slave, were neither of them likely to continue their predilection to the humble servant and slave of a Mrs. Francis Grenfell, living in a lodging-house in Manchester-street or Sloane-square, the door of which was opened by a slipshod housemaid or dirty footboy.

To such particulars Cupid deigns not descend. The prospect before them, viev through the deceptive medium of love, p sented "an elegant sufficiency, content," a all the pleasing gentilities suggested by C per, Thomson, and other bachelor poets, have deceived themselves and the world ideal representations of domestic life. A strolling together arm-in-arm through snug shrubberies of the Lodge, which in ter boasted their evergreens and holly-b for shade and shelter, they returned tc drawing-room, convinced that, in case c King's recovery and the continued dis of the Whigs, the official preferment of was as secure as the happiness of his Alike gifted by nature, they seemed ma happiness, and happiness for them. A ship of four years' duration left no doubt mind of either of compatibility of temp pursuits; and if Frank Grenfell had nc ago preferred the suit which was nc

dearest object of his wishes, Julia was aware that it was only in deference to her pretensions, and in dread of the ambition of her worldly-minded aunt and uncle.

But now, by a touch of enchantment, all difficulties had disappeared! By a chance little short of miraculous, Sir Henry Woodbridge disdained the matchless creature provided for him by the will of his mother and the designs of the Raynhams; the Raynhams themselves had renounced the dearest prejudices of their nature to advance his happiness; the prospects of his party were undergoing as singular a developement as his own; and, to crown all, his Julia, untrue to the froward nature of her sex, had not begun to raise obstacles because those in existence were disappearing. How could he do less than pour into her ear the overflowing rhapsodies of a lover's gratitude, — than paint in the most glowing colours the domestic Eden awaiting them, — while gazing upon one of the loveliest faces that ever smiled

on the tenderness or infatuation of a plighted lover?

It was precisely as they were returning to gether from their walk, their eyes radiant witl joy and mutual affection, that under the por tico of the Lodge they encountered Miss Gret fell coming in search of them. Poor Bessy heart was sad, and her brow serious; for a ready she had received fatal confirmation of h fears, and was prepared to express to both t full measure of her uneasiness. But, on me ing them face to face, she was so struck by expression of heartfelt happiness and love the countenances of both,—by the proud, m ly-looking appearance of the brother v whom she had grown up from infancy, and confiding sweetness of her who, in spite o poverty, had generously chosen him as her band, — that, instead of meditating a s word of admonition, she threw herself Julia Loveden's arms in a passion of t

She had found a sister; it was impossible at such a moment to play the moralist!

Even the volatile Frank was deeply affected. It was so seldom that his reserved Bessy gave way to an effusion of sensibility, that the effect was only the more potent. Her weeping was as that of a manly nature, which is never witnessed without emotion.

Unwilling to expose the tears of the two beings dearest to him on earth to the coarse observations of a ninny like Lady Mary, or a worldling like Lady Raynham, he persuaded them to take another turn with him in the shrubberies; and Bessy trembled on perceiving the mad elation of spirits which now rendered his ever-sanguine soul reckless of all evils, present or to come. For some of these it was her pressing duty to prepare him. It was impossible to doubt that Lady Mary Woodbridge would resent his engagement to Julia as an act of treachery towards her son; and his

sister accordingly implored him to be cautious in the communication.

"But how often must I remind you that Sir Henry was the first to declare he would no be drilled into matrimony? How often must assure you that he made no secret of havin been driven from Hursley Park by La Mary's manœuvres?" cried Frank in self-v dication.

"Still, my aunt appears to have underst that his aversion arose from mere opposition her wishes; and continued to flatter herself t sooner or later, she was to have Miss Lov for a daughter-in-law," replied Miss Gre addressing herself to Julia.

"Sooner or later, indeed!" interr Frank in a fury. "Did she imagine t Julia Loveden was to sit in patient hu waiting till the handkerchief was throw by his Sublime Highness? Have I not Woodbridge fifty times assert that th woman in England to whom he was res

determined never to offer his hand, was Lord Raynham's niece ?"

"Yes! but it is your having heard it, which makes the misery of the case! Before you, he spoke confidentially; and, through you, his observations never should have transpired."

"You speak as if his observations were the cause of my objections to him," said Miss Loveden. "Yet how often, dearest Bess, have I expressed to yourself (long before I had an idea of being an object of preference to your brother, or that my uncle's consent would ever be granted to our marriage,) my thorough contempt for Sir Henry Woodbridge and every thing belonging to him !"

"Then you were unjust; for there is nothing about my cousin which deserves to be an object of contempt," replied Miss Grenfell with candour.

"There is no accounting for tastes. A man too lazy to interest himself in the pursuits of

others or in his own,—too inert to be either amused or amusing,—is to me contemptible!"

"To be amused or amusing is not, however exactly the highest purpose of life," replied Bessy gravely.

"It is as high a one as Sir Henry Woodbridge is capable of attaining."

"I can't agree with you. I admit that my cousin has an uncultivated mind, that his manners are ungraceful, and his habits indolent but, in proof that he possesses good qualities we need go no further than his generosity to Frank; not only pecuniary generosity, but the far greater liberality of viewing without jealousy his superior talents and better acceptance in society."

"For the last, Sir Henry Woodbridge must be tolerably accustomed by this time to find himself eclipsed in society; but for the former what wonderful generosity has he ever shown to your brother? Has he made him independent? With Sir Henry's immense for-

he might have done so without even becoming conscious of the sacrifice!"

"He has made him what ought to be independent, by giving him a college education, and launching him in a liberal profession."

Julia Loveden looked surprised, and Grenfell coloured deeply. He had always, indeed, spoken of his cousin as a benefactor; but, unwilling to depreciate himself in Julia's eyes, had not announced the full extent of his obligations. Miss Loveden was aware of the limited nature of his income, but not from what source the greater part of that income was derived. He had intended to explain such matters hereafter. The gentle dawn of love must not be overcast by themes so disheartening!

Both parties therefore were embarrassed by this abrupt allusion, and Bessy the most so of the three; for, convinced that it had not been the intention of her brother wilfully to deceive, she saw she had anticipated explana-

tions which had come with a better grace from himself.

"But even admitting Sir Henry's demerits," resumed Miss Grenfell, "it is not by his mo ther we can expect the admission to be co firmed; and I entreat you, my dear brothe to break your engagement to her without lo of time, but not in the presence of a thi person."

Both Frank and Julia understood, of cour these wise counsels to apply to Lady Ra ham; and it was determined that the girls should prolong their walk together, w Grenfell returned alone to the house to n œuvre Lady Mary into a *tête-à-tête*, wi view to a general *éclaircissement*.

But matters were differently ordained. sitting-rooms at Raynham Lodge were nected together, according to the inconve system of many modern mansions, by a ternal conservatory, which served, whe windows were unclosed, the purpose of a

pering gallery to the whole suite; and, as Grenfell traversed the empty book-room, sounds accordingly reached him from the drawing-room beyond, which proved that he came too late, — that his secret had already transpired. He heard the voice of Lady Mary Woodbridge raging like a hurricane. Her usual emphasis was expanded into bombast; and, though Lady Raynham's small reedy pipe was scarcely audible in interruption, he discovered that Sir Robert Crewe, who had arrived on a morning visit, was officiating as blower to the great Haerlem organ, or rather as stokesman to the fires of the engine. Fortunately for Frank, he was spared the anterior portion of their conversation.

"Your ladyship may call it what you please!" was the first exclamation of Sir Henry Woodbridge's indignant parent; "but I shall never cease to regard it as a most nefarious transaction! Had any other man in England put himself forward as my son's

rival with Miss Loveden, I could have borne it!"

"But why talk of rivalship, when you yourself acquainted me that Sir Henry Woodbridge had pledged himself to the Whig party and expressed his utter indifference to m niece?" retorted Lady Raynham in the to of a cracked oboe.

"And to what has Mister Francis Gren pledged himself, I should like to know?"

"Upon my soul and honour! there can be a more decided Whig than my fr Frank," chimed in Sir Robert, shaking empty head.

"His political opinions are of no c quence," replied Lady Raynham. "He borough-holder; he has neither vote n fluence!"

"Influence, indeed! not so much as obtain him a portership in a public c screamed Lady Mary.

"Poor fellow! By George, there's

enough to boast of in poor Frank's interest in a political point of view!" added the General with spiteful sympathy.

"He to pretend to a woman's hand in opposition to his cousin,—his friend,—his benefactor!" cried Lady Mary. "He—brought up on the charity of my poor son!—enabled to support a figure in life through the benevolence of the very man he has presumed to supplant!"

"Most ungrateful conduct, by the Lord Harry!" ejaculated old Crewe, standing like a superannuated Macheath between the two ladies. "But do you mean to say, my dear madam, that the Baronet actually provided for the expenses of young Grenfell's college education?"

"Every guinea, every shilling!" exclaimed the tender aunt.

"I always understood from your ladyship," interposed Lady Raynham drily, "that you were appointed guardian to the young Gren-

fells. The usual guardianship for people who are penniless is the poor-house."

"Eight thousand pounds to be divided be tween two young people in Frank and Bess Grenfell's position in life, is as good as n thing," retorted Lady Mary.

"As *bad* as nothing, rather," added S Robert with a facetious smile.

"Yet I have heard of young men getti very well through Oxford with two hundi a-year," observed Lady Raynham calmly.

"Not with Frank Grenfell's disposit madam,—not with Frank Grenfell's disp tion!" cried her angry neighbour.

"Upon my word and honour! he is a g rous, open-handed young man," observed I Raynham; who, having heard him daily dicated for two years by her niece, was l liarly qualified to speak in the young g man's justification.

"Open-handed, indeed!—easy enoug be liberal with other people's money,—

enough to be hospitable in another person's house, — easy enough to be obliging with horses, carriages, and servants at command that are not your own!"

"Frank certainly had the free disposal of most things at Hursley Park! By the Lord Harry! my young friend the Baronet was not more thoroughly at home there," cried Crewe the crafty.

"Not half so much! Harry was too indolent to take upon himself, like his cousin! I vow and protest, there was not that thing belonging to my son, which he would have withheld one moment from that ungrateful fellow!"

"And now, to rob him of the object nearest his regard!" sighed the malicious old General. "Upon my soul and honour, 'tis really too abominable!"

Lady Raynham, having made up her mind beforehand to an explosion of wrath on the part of Lady Mary, (of the tenacity of whose

projects concerning Julia she was well aware,) was too well prepared to take much heed of what was said, satisfied that the half which was not invention would be exaggeration. She remained, therefore, provokingly silent, till her equanimity stimulated her angry neighbour almost to frenzy.

"I tell you what, Lady Raynham," cried she, raising her unmusical voice to the high pitch; "grieved as I am to utter an unkind wish concerning any member of your family I feel myself justified by the treachery by which my son has fallen a victim, in hearing praying Heaven that Frank Grenfell, like his insolvent father before him, may die in the King's Bench; and that his widow, like Mrs. Grenfell's mother, may come whining to Hartley Park for alms to help in bringing up her children!"

"Did Mrs. Grenfell ask alms at Hartley Park?" demanded Sir Robert with feigned astonishment.

"Impossible!" replied Lady Raynham with her usual *sang froid.* "My friend Lady Mary could not have been ignorant of the distressed situation of Sir Gideon's only sister; and would not, I am convinced, have reduced her to so humiliating an alternative! My friend Lady Mary is too well aware of what is due to the nearest kindred of her son."

"I only wish I had left them to their fate!" cried Lady Mary; "Frank would have been plodding, at this moment, as clerk at a sugar-baker's in Cheapside, instead of presuming to compete with Sir Henry Woodbridge; and Miss Grenfell been living as companion to a lady, instead of hanging upon me, driving my son away from his comfortable home. But 'tis all over! Of the brother, thank Heaven! I have already washed my hands; and next month, when she is of age, out of my house goes the sister! I will harbour no ungrateful beggars at Hursley Park!"

It is probable that, had Lady Mary Wood-

bridge been of the opposite sex, Frank Gren fell, to whose ear her latter observations ha been distinctly audible, would have rushe into the room and knocked him down. But was a woman by whom himself and his fami were thus cruelly insulted;—a woman,—a lation,—a benefactress! For the first time his life, the harsh reality of his fortunes placed before him; and, coarsely as they v portrayed, there was only too much truth the picture! How was it that all this hitherto escaped his heed? How was it he had remained so slightly conscious o obligations towards his wealthy cousin? it that Sir Henry himself had dealt with so generously and delicately that the bu was unfelt? In that case, how cold slighting, had been his own conduct turn! If Lady Mary's assertions wer and her son did cherish ultimate ho marrying Miss Loveden, how was he

be forgiven for having requited good with such pungent evil!

Instead of rushing forward in his own vindication, to rebuke the insolent taunting of Lady Mary, he staggered to the wall of the solitary chamber, and stood leaning there in bitter emotion, with cold drops of anguish standing forth upon his brow!

Yes! he was an all-but beggar, an all-but ungrateful beggar! His father had died in gaol. He was indebted to Sir Henry Woodbridge for passing through the university as a man of family and fortune. Sir Henry might, if he chose, deprive him of the means of becoming the husband of his beloved Julia; might dismiss him from his regard, and Bessy from his doors. They were, as they had been described by Lady Mary, two miserable, poor relations, two indigent hangers-on upon the Woodbridge family.

He wept! — Yes! the proud, high-cou-

raged Frank Grenfell, but a few moment before so joyous and exulting, now stood lean ing in tears against the wall of Lady Rayı ham's book-room! But after a brief pause h dashed the tears from his eyes, and becan himself again. He had taken a desperate r solution. Hitherto he had not been sufficient explicit with Julia. He would forth, and t her all. He would reveal his exact positi It would be better for Miss Loveden to le the worst from him, than from the unwoma denunciations of a Lady Mary Woodbridge

It required some courage to take this de mination; it required still more to put it execution. Frank's heart almost failed when, having quitted the house, he came more in sight of Julia and Bessy, wal together in cheerful sisterly chat. He c not bear to mar the sunshine of their y hearts by pictures of shame or necessity could not bear to humiliate his sister in sence of his future wife; he could not

to grieve his future wife in presence of his sister. Nevertheless, it must be done! Since others could speak thus boldly and bitterly, it was time that he himself took courage to paint matters in their true colours.

CHAPTER XII.

Noble minds
Suffer too much from those indignities
Which vicious times and persons cast upon them
BEN JO

THERE was no need for him to accost tl his altered mien instantly apprized the affectionate hearts to which he was so that something was wrong. "My dear Fr — "My dearest brother!" burst simu ously from their lips.

For some moments Frank was incapa reply, and Julia began to be seriously al

"I feared it would be thus!" cried in dismay. "Lady Mary has insulted y

Her brother pressed in silence the arm locked in his own.

"But why, dear Frank, distress yourself thus?" exclaimed Miss Loveden. "Surely, there is nothing that silly woman can say which ought to give you one moment's pain."

"It is not what Lady Mary Woodbridge may say that pains me," he replied in a voice hoarse with emotion; "it is the suggestions of my own heart with which I am struggling: it is *I* who am to blame; it is myself whom I accuse. Julia! dear Julia, I am come to throw myself upon your mercy!"

Miss Loveden, blushing crimson, became almost as much agitated as himself.

"I have not been as candid with you as I ought," continued her lover; "I have still to confide, — still to explain."

"Give me a moment to recover myself!" faltered Julia, apprehending with a woman's strongest instinct some confidence relating to a rival.

"I should have spoken out from the first, as I compel myself to do now," resumed

Grenfell, "but for the grief of having to appear before my Julia — my beautiful and prosperous friend — as the miserable fellow that I am! You think me poor, Julia, with my wretched income of five hundred a-year: what will you consider me when I own that, of even that, more than half is a concessio from others! My dear, self-denying siste here, supplies one hundred."

"Frank, Frank!" interrupted Bessy, "ho *dare* you make distinctions of property betwe yours and mine!"

"Two hundred more," persisted Fran trembling for the strength of his own reso tion, "are vouchsafed me by my moth nephew from a fortune of twenty thous per annum, to which I am heir presumpti but *still* it is vouchsafed; it *is* an allowa — it is a gift, withdrawable at Sir Hen will and pleasure."

"But you well know that my cou honourable nature is a guarantee against

caprice of the kind," again indignantly interrupted Bessy.

"So long as I am compelled to accept it, I am neither more nor less than his pensioner," resumed Frank in conclusion. "You promised to share my pittance when you considered it mine; will you, my most beloved Julia, do so, now you are aware of my dependence?"

Julia Loveden was mortifyingly silent.

"If you have not courage to become the wife of a man on whom his nearest relations are entitled to heap such words as 'dependent,'—'ingrate,'—pronounce my fate at once!"

The agitation of Grenfell as he spoke was painful to behold. Involuntarily his teeth ground together, and his pallid lips quivered as he reflected that a great portion of the evil was of his own creation. How lightly had he incurred by his follies those obligations which he was now thus bitterly repenting!

"Speak, Julia!" he cried, his voice gra-

dually softening, as tenderer apprehensions effaced the anguish of his remorse. "These evils, dearest, cannot be of long continuance. Sheridan assures me that my interests with the Prince are safe; and Lord and Lady Raynham inform you that those of the Prince are safe with the country. It will not be long, perhaps, ere I am able to place affluence and splendour at the feet of my wife; but, in the interim, has my bride strength of mind and affection to share the humiliations I have laid bare?"

"My dearest Frank," cried Miss Loveden, recovering her power of utterance the moment her sensitive lover diverged from his own feelings to generalities of worldly interest, "forgive me if I say to you again, as I have often said before, 'put not your trust in Princes!' Be yourself, and rise superior to all necessity for patronage from the Prince of Wales. My momentary silence just now rendered you uneasy. You wronged me! It did not proceed

from hesitation. Though startled by the new picture you have given me of our prospects in life, no change is produced in my intentions. On the contrary, dearest Frank, the courage and candour of your avowals raise you a thousand-fold in my estimation. The effort of this explanation—an effort of conscientious honesty—has rendered you dearer than ever. My heart was too full to speak. I was accusing myself, Frank, of having undervalued you. I have sometimes fancied you light, volatile, nay, even heartless. I appreciate you better now. Your declaration, just now, burst from the depths of a feeling and generous soul."

Frank was silent. How better could he reply to such a heartstirring address? — It was Bessy who recalled the lovers from their mutual joy.

"But what did Lady Mary Woodbridge say in answer to your communication?" she inquired of her brother.

"I made no communication. I have not

even entered her presence. Old Crewe was there, and before him I could not explain myself. But the sound of her voice through the conservatory convinced me that she is now apprised of all, and that you were right in anticipating her utmost resentment. From so vulgar-minded a woman what can we expect but vulgarity and noise? The only objects she sees in creation are herself and her son; the slightest offence to either she regards as high treason."

"But what signify to us Lady Mary's regardings or her vulgarities?" cried Julia. "She has clearly no influence over her son, or she would have made him my suitor: Sir Henry's conduct is usually biassed contrariwise by her arguments. With respect to scolding and quarrelling, in which I admit her to be an adept, we must keep out of her way."

"But Bessy, — but my sister, — she cannot keep out of Lady Mary's way; and on her

will fall the full measure of the furious old woman's anger!"

"Frank, this is no moment for Miss-ish punctilio," said Miss Loveden. "Our union, if things remain under their present aspect, cannot be far distant. On my part you will meet with no hesitation, — no delays. Your candour has rendered you doubly dear to me, and inspired me with real confidence."

"But I was speaking of Bessy's annoyance," said Frank, hesitating whether on such encouragement to speak of anything but his own gratitude.

"Well?"

"And you, dearest, of our approaching happiness."

"Was it necessary to add that I spoke with reference to her? Was it necessary to say that from the moment we have a home of our own, it is hers? Had Bessy been happy at Hursley Park, there would have been folly as well as presumption in courting her thence

to the abode of two poor foolish people, self-engrossed, and obliged to renounce more than the necessaries of life. But, as it is, I know that she would be happier with us,—I know that we should be happier with her. I should not in fact be easy to have her remain one day more than is necessary under the roof of Lady Mary Woodbridge."

Bessy Grenfell replied by a look of grateful affection, more acceptable than words, and Frank by pressing to his lips the hand he held within his own. He could not, however, forbear adding —

"But, alas! in the interim of these arrangements, Bessy will have heavy days to pass!"

"Is Lady Mary, then, so very violently exasperated?" demanded Julia with a smile; for to her the anger or pleasure of such a woman always wore a ludicrous aspect.

"Beyond all reason. You, dearest, — you have no intimate connection with her, — may

laugh at her irritability; but to be exposed from morning till night to the petulance of a mean spirit, and low mind, —— Scot!

"Courage! A mean spirit and low mind are more easily managed than any other! Leave Lady Mary to me. I will undertake to bring her round!"

"Whom could you not bring round? Who could resist those winning looks and words?" cried the infatuated Frank; while Bessy, as she saw her beautiful sister-in-law fly from thence towards the house, felt with a secret sigh that, kind as Julia was, and lovely and endearing, she should have preferred to find the word "manage" a stranger from her lips. Miss Loveden was too young, too fair, too good, to be already a tactician.

Now that the excitement of her presence was over, Bessy was glad that her brother, instead of dwelling further on his engagement, began to discourse with her concerning her own prospects. Perhaps he dreaded to hear the calmer

and more deliberate judgment of his wise sister; for scarcely was Julia out of sight, when he began to talk of Lord Warkworth,—a subject on which Bessy, as well as himself, could speak without embarrassment, for their feelings were wholly untouched.

"You escaped meeting Lord Teviot here, my dear Bess, only by a few hours," observed Frank. "This morning, before he took his departure for town, he requested a private interview with me, and insisted strongly upon Lord Warkworth's claims upon you for an answer to his letters, and his earnest hopes of a favourable one."

"He will have none," replied Miss Grenfell firmly. "After the insolence with which I was treated by his father, I shall hold no further communication with the family."

"You may be right, my dear; I have nothing to urge in these people's defence: but as I cannot avoid meeting them in the world, and being pestered by their importunities, for my

sake say 'No' at once, and make an end of the business."

"My dear Frank, I wrote it to Lord Warkworth as plainly as the two letters could be written. I next said it to him as plainly as words could speak; and nothing shall induce me to hold further intercourse with him or his."

"At least accord them the merit of being disinterested in their pertinacity," observed Grenfell.

"I have no right to say otherwise, for fortune is certainly not their object. Yet I am convinced that Lord Teviot has some ulterior motive for a change so sudden; it is impossible that such a man could be actuated by wise or honourable motives."

"Bessy, Bessy, you are prejudiced,—you are bitter!" cried her brother, recalling to mind Mr. Sheridan's earnest advocacy of Lord Warkworth. "God forbid that I should control your choice in favour of any man; your own sense can guide you better than my advice.

Still, as a brother, I feel it my duty to remind you of the precariousness of your situation, and entreat you to weigh well and compare the difference between a rich peeress, the wife of an affectionate husband, a man of good reputation, and the *souffre-douleur* of a Lady Mary Woodbridge, or even the beloved inmate of a household so confined as that of your brother."

"I heard you promise Miss Loveden just now to place affluence and splendour at her feet!" remonstrated Bessy with a melancholy smile. "But, without requiring you to redeem the pledge, believe me, the most homely household with you and Julia would suffice to my happiness. My dear Frank, it is not long since you and I began to talk so fastidiously! What was our early home? What were my mother's occupations? What were our own privations?—Heaven knows it was not the ease or luxury of our childhood that ought to render us so contemptuous."

Grenfell's countenance changed. He felt the

force of his sister's rebuke, unconsciously; and neither from affectation nor hypocrisy had he acquired the habit of seeing things with the eyes of his aristocratic friends, and discussing them in their tone.

"At all events," said he, "talk over with Julia, Warkworth's pretensions before you empower me finally to dismiss the cause."

"Julia and I have more than once discussed the matter: she fully agrees with me that Lord Warkworth is a solemn fop,—a thing a thousand times more incurable than a dressy dandy; and, then, no woman could be either happy or respectable with a husband she despised."

"Well, I must tell him all this as civilly as I can. It will be good practice for the logic and eloquence for which I may soon find exercise in parliament," cried Frank gaily. "I suppose I shall find him unconvincible. Jack Hartwell always swore that his cousin Peter's noble cub was the most obstinate blockhead in Oxford! But, my dearest Bess, if Julia should

not succeed in pacifying Lady Mary? If she should set off back again in dudgeon to Hursley Park?"

"No! my aunt's rages expend themselves in words. Lady Mary is silly, interested, and petulant; but she is not malicious or unkind. She will be in a fury against you; rage, and storm, and threaten eternal resentment against the Raynhams; then veer round to within a point of 'fair' about dinner-time, while comparing her morning bargains with those of Lady Raynham and Julia. Between ourselves, there is less mischief in Lady Mary's foul weather than in Lady Raynham's fine."

"I believe you. I thoroughly mistrust these people," Frank was beginning. But a smart slap on the back warned him not to proceed; and Sir Robert Crewe, who had followed them in their last turns from the house, little suspecting how much Frank had overheard of his spiteful suggestions, now locked his arm in Grenfell's, and began to congratulate

him both in general and particular. He pronounced him to be the happiest of men in being the accepted lover of the lovely Julia; and predicted that "by the Lord Harry!" the British islands would become the happiest of islands under the ascendancy of the Whigs. He had long thought that a change was wanting. There was not in the kingdom a stancher Tory than himself; but since the loss of the immortal Billy, upon his soul and honour! things had worn a very different aspect in the party. The Prince, in the prime of life, a man of the most enlightened mind,—a good scholar, an admirable soldier,—'the best cavalry officer in Europe,' (what would Frederick the Great have said, he should like to know, to the discipline of the Tenth?)—could not fail to give universal satisfaction at the helm of affairs, to Europe—and—and—and—the other quarters of the globe."

For a moment Frank Grenfell felt inclined to shake the old fellow off like some noxious

reptile. Second thoughts convinced him that it was doing a Sir Robert Crewe too much honour to be moved to anger by his petty mischiefs.

"Why, yes; as you say, things at home and abroad are in a very flourishing condition," said he, prepared to mystify the old Marplot in return for his treachery. "Orders in council, Berlin and Milan decrees, have secured the prosperity of the manufacturing interests. The Bank currency is hourly rising in popular estimation; and gold has fallen to three guineas an ounce. The Catholics have withdrawn their claims till a more convenient season. Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida have crowned the British flag with immortal laurels; and the afflicting deaths of Baring and Goldsmid afford flattering encouragement to the city capitalist. As you say, the Whigs are likely to win golden opinions of all sorts of men by their legislation of, and for, the United Kingdom!—Every thing is wrought to their hand. The seed is

sown; it only remains for them to reap. The wisdom of parliament, and the gallantry of his Majesty's aid-de-camps, will unquestionably effect all that can be desired by the wide ambitions of the country."

Sir Robert, unconscious of having excited the enmity of young Grenfell, attributed this boyish spirit of *fanfaronnade* to the elation of his position. He saw that he was quizzed; and began to banter in return.

"And what will our charming friend in Bruton-street say to this sudden match of yours?" he inquired jocosely.

"Is Lady Mary Russell a friend of yours, my dear General? — Impossible! or she would have confided to you long ago a match that seems to take you by surprise. Her ladyship was my confidante. I am surprised that she did not make you hers!"

"Perhaps she did! By the Lord Harry, I am not the man to betray her!" cried Crewe, trying to look mysterious. "Upon my soul

and honour! Miss Grenfell, I may be trusted. Ask the Miss Beckfords whether"—

But neither Grenfell nor his sister had patience for his little dirty mendacities. Eager to ascertain what progress Julia was making in Lady Mary's favour, they complained of the chilliness of the weather, and hurried back to the house.

CHAPTER XIII.

These are the moths and scarabs of a state,
The bane of empires and the dregs of court,
Who, to advance themselves unto employment,
Care not whose fate they blast.

BEN JONSON.

VIRTUE rarely passes unrecognised by the world. A few distorted optics may fail to recognise her features; but it would be as easy to conceal the face of the noon-day sun under a mask as her resplendent features. The dark face of vice is far easier of disguise. Not a vizard-shop but supplies a hundred varnished faces, smiling and serene, to conceal her deformities from the unwary.

In the familiar scenes of society, many a man passes through life, not only with his errors

unsuspected, but disguising his very faults in the semblance of virtues. There is a sort of stupid equanimity which is invariably mistaken for good temper. It listens unmoved to reviling, — it supports the crosses of life without murmur, — it resembles good temper as pewter resembles silver. Obstinacy in the same manner dignifies itself by sporting the Roman toga of firmness. Charles I. and George III. were honoured by their parties with the name of "Firm," till posterity reversed the judgment and applied a truer epithet.

Frank Grenfell, deceived by pretensions of a similar nature, was now lost in admiration of Lady Raynham's "steadiness of purpose." Lady Mary's insults, and Sir Robert Crewe's side-thrusts, had done no injury to his cause. She received him and Bessy with the utmost cordiality. Julia was attending Lady Mary to her dressing-room, and attempting to pour oil on the billows of her wrath. But Lady Raynham begged the Grenfells to set their

minds at ease; she had the utmost confidence in Miss Loveden's powers of persuasion; and, in the interim, begged them to believe that nothing Lady Mary could say or do would operate the smallest change in her sentiments or those of Lord Raynham.

This was real consolation to poor Frank; for, throughout his recent negotiations with the family, he had felt persuaded that, when it came to the point of settlements, the Raynhams would expect sacrifices from his opulent relatives at Hursley Park, to whom he had made up his mind that nothing should induce him to incur further obligations.

But this point was now resolved. The Raynhams, defying the enmity of the Woodbridges, must be prepared to dispense with their favours. He was the happiest of men, and Julia's formal aunt the most disinterested and strong-minded of women!

He was not of course aware of the grounds on which she had adopted the resolution to

which she thus philosophically adhered. The creature of placeship and official life, Lady Raynham, so far from being strong in the political principles of which she had appeared a violent partisan, was of opinion that the true political faith is that which renders the monarch for the time being acceptable to the people, and ministers acceptable to the monarch for the time being. Professing the convenient philosophy that a cause is ruined only by inherent weakness, she had made up her mind that if the crazy, or, as she called it, venerable, structure of Toryism fell to the ground, it was because its fulness of time was come. After the establishment of a Regency, so soon to be converted by the natural course of time into sovereignty, the party to which she had been so long appended must grovel in the dust. The Whig Prince, of whom she was the senior in age, would, during the remainder of hers and Lord Raynham's life, depress the fallen Tories as completely as his predecessor had

kept down the Whigs. Recalling to mind the contumely she had seen endured by the wives and families of Opposition peers, her courtly pride shrank from the notion of being frowned away from drawing-rooms, and excluded from Frogmore *fêtes*. She could not bear the thoughts of sinking into honest nothingness; for, to her, wealth and station were nothingness unless shone upon by the auspicious rays of power.

What would Raynham Lodge become in the eyes of the neighbourhood when no longer affording holiday venison to Lords of the Treasury and Chancellors of the Exchequer? — No better than a Hursley Park! — Nay, Oak Hill itself might rise superior if honoured by some stray satrap of Downing-street. Mansions visited of Ministers undergo a different destiny from the abodes honoured of old by the descent of the gods, or the residence of a saint or prophet: instead of being erected into temples and shrines, they become—

"A fixed figure for the hand of Scorn
To point his slow unmoving finger at."

People say, "That is Toady Place, where those fools the Spreadfeasts spent such a fortune in entertainments to Lord ——!"

Convinced therefore that the Prince and the Whigs, and the Prince and the Throne, were to be henceforth one, she determined to take her station as near as possible to the foot, and seize the earliest opportunity to creep upwards. Lord Raynham and herself protested to each other, that for some time past they had been discontented with the existing order of things; that the Peninsula alarmed them,—that Walcheren disgusted them,—that the state of the popular mind was most critical. Mrs. Perceval had been too long in returning Lady Raynham's last visit; and Lord Eldon had omitted to notice an application from his lordship concerning the reversion of a living which did not happen to be in the Chancellor's gift.

Lord Raynham remarked to his lady that he had in fact no tie to the present administration. He had never held office; his obligations to Ministers in a few trifling instances were matters of private friendship—a mere exchange for his personal hospitalities. There was nothing — positively nothing to prevent him from voting according to his conscience on the Regency question, or in tendering his faithful services to the Prince through the medium of his young friend Frank Grenfell.

Lady Raynham was precisely of the same opinion. What civilities had they not wasted on the Tories, and how little had they received in return! A paltry Welsh Judgeship and a very small Deanery! Five barley loaves and two small fishes in requital of turtle, venison, and hogsheads of claret! It would be the ruin of the poor Swinburns and Rowes, if their uncle should cut himself out of all access to the throne during the ensuing reign. They had married on the promise of his protection,

he had no right to deprive himself of the power of bestowing it.

Like the double-jointed French tumbler who, having sold his skeleton to the faculty and had the misfortune afterwards to break leg, had an action for damages brought agai him by his proprietors, his lordship had right to tumble down wilfully and with ma prepense. His soul was not his own, any r than Mazurier's body.

Their resolution thus mutually thoug cretly taken, Frank Grenfell must at an be propitiated. Frank was become thei ning-card, their amulet, their pass-wor mattered little what was said concernin or what he said of himself. Plenary gence was the order of the day. Lad Woodbridge might have called him a instead of a pauper; and, unless th proved a transportable offence or matter, it would have been overlooked

Nevertheless, nothing was easier th

ceive with an air of magnanimity the young lover's compliments upon her "steadiness of purpose." She promised him that every ebullition of peevishness on the part of Hursley Park should be disregarded; and by disclosing the secret that Lady Mary was deploring the loss of a peerage, not the loss of a daughter-in-law, she put an end to Grenfell's self-revilings and Bessy's regrets. Convinced that their cousin had been no party to any bargain of the sort, Sir Henry had nothing to complain of.

They were consequently as much amused as gratified to behold Lady Mary shortly sail into the room, leaning upon the arm of Julia Loveden, and prepared for clemency rather than reconciliation. She chose to be ill-used in the business; and Julia, who viewed all her moods and tenses as a matter of ridicule, judged it better to leave her the enjoyment of her injuries, by appealing to her mercy instead of her justice. Per aid of much art, some flat-

tery, and a little spirit, Miss Loveden had, in short, fulfilled her promise of "bringing her round." Lady Mary had consented to accept her as a niece,—had promised to consider o vouchsafing her forgiveness to Frank; and, b a dexterous allusion of Julia to the pressi invitation recently given by Lord and La Waterton to Miss Grenfell, (which she had cidentally learned from Frank,) had even b moved to assert that Bessy's natural h was at Hursley Park, and that, till the at ment of her majority, "she must not be sight of by her guardian."

Peace, therefore, was now restored i two families; or rather, a hollow truc taken place, which, as there was no Sir Crewe at hand to interfere, was likely t lasting. Frank was to write and acqu Henry with his change of prospects, as it transpired, through some lette struction to his bailiff, banker, or g what part of the United Kingdom th

Baronet was to be found; no news of him having reached Lady Mary for a month past. He was last seen, indeed, at Doncaster Races; where he acquainted one of the young Danstons, whom he met on the course, that he should be in Hampshire about Christmas, being for the present engaged in a round of Yorkshire gaieties.

It was not, however, improbable that the term thus fixed for his return home might be forestalled. Young Woodbridge was growing weary of the clatter and ostentation of country-houses full of company. On the moors he had drunk deep, diced deep, and led the hard harassing life led by nine fashionable sportsmen out of ten, in mere want of other pursuits. For the first week, the flurry and excitement of the thing delighted him,—grouse and farintosh were novelties; and even Tom Hounslow, Lord Marytown, and their noisy set, were easier to be supported "o'er the muir among the heather," than on Epsom

Downs or in the Ring in Hyde Park. But natural indolence soon overcame the charm. Sir Henry Woodbridge's sauntering habits came back upon him. Having proved himself the best shot of the party, he took no further pleasure in the sport; and ended by lounging about every morning near home till the party returned to dinner. He wanted somebody to talk to. The people about Benrara talked Gaelic; and the Hounslow set, slang. He wanted companions with whom he could converse,—Frank and Bessy Grenfell, or the pleasant family at Oak Hill. Even Hursley Lodge, even home, was better than the moors!

At Huntley Castle, whither at the expiration of a fortnight the shooting party repaired, he was scarcely better off. The set into which he was now initiated, though very different from the picture drawn by the blacking-bottle Sir Robert Crewe, was precisely of the picture least agreeable to a shy young man, *ennuyé*. Coarse, noisy, free and easy:

individuals forming the party in the house must either be their butts or their confederates. It was the era of practical jokes, always silly and vulgar, often cruel; and Sir Henry soon discovered that he must submit to become a victim, unless he could summon courage to be a tormentor. From the one his pride recoiled, from the other his laziness. He did not choose to be shown up at breakfast as having passed the night with a donkey tethered in his dressing-room,—a cock crowing in his cupboard,—or a phosphoric spectre flaming at the bottom of his bed; nor did he care to exert himself in inflicting similar punishment upon others. He was consequently voted "spooney," when in a less aristocratic mansion he would probably have passed for "proud;" but, on turning his back upon Huntley Castle, (after being harassed into a quarrel with his friend Tom, which had all but ended in a duel,) he felt that the monotony of Hursley was preferable to the un-

meaning uproariousness of the Devil-may-cares! He had mingled with less disgust in their career of coffee-house irregularities; but the same excesses transferred to a domestic roof, and with ladies as participators, revolted his English sense of decency.

"And this is what is called seeing th world!" cried Sir Henry, as his four poste dashed towards England, as though impatie as himself to escape to more civilized hab "If noise and jollity are to be trusted, people yonder really find pleasure in play hot-cockles and hunt-the-slipper, and clip hair-brushes into other persons' beds. Hei If such be the best amusement that fifty t sand a year can provide to one of the houses in the kingdom, I would as soo ploughboy! What a bore it all is! Ho the world seems of itself! Fine ladies ing like housemaids, by way of pretend be in spirits; and fine gentlemen roari drinking like stable-boys, in order t

them in countenance! If ever I marry and settle, my wife must be able to make my house pleasant without turning it into a bear-garden. I have often, by the way, heard Frank Grenfell point out Miss Loveden's peculiar art of entertaining a party. Certainly, when she is not at Raynham Lodge, it is the stupidest house in our neighbourhood; either politics and squabbling, or dead silence. But, when Julia arrives, the young people get together and into good-humour, till they bring even the old ones about them. At Oak Hill plenty of chat, but all about music. I defy any one to say what it is about at the Lodge! Frank Grenfell, lively and clever as he is, can scarcely keep pace with Julia's vivacity! To do her justice, she is capable of taking the fatigue of entertaining his company off the hands of her husband."

Before Sir Henry quitted Yorkshire, the merits of the young lady he had so cavalierly rejected were forced upon his observation in

another point of view. When mounting to the Doncaster Stand in company with Lord Marytown and Captain Wexford, he found himself suddenly seized upon by Lady Clowance, with whom he had no further acquaintance than having been invited to her ball by Frank, who was invited by Lady Mary Russell; and, *bon gré malgré*, enlisted in her ladyship's party, consisting of a squadron c daughters and nieces, much resembling tl picture of the eleven thousand virgins disei barking at Cologne. To such a detachm of spinsters, at such a moment, even a r ensign in the Guards, the younger son c younger son, would have been an acquisiti but a Sir Henry, with twenty-two year age and twenty thousand pounds per an was literally torn to pieces.

Overwhelmed with smiles and small — introduced to fathers, uncles, guarc brothers, — all that he had heard of th famed hospitality of Yorkshire was ou

in the urgency of the invitations showered upon the good-looking owner of Hursley Park. One young lady assured him that her father had the best preserves in the North Riding; a second promised him the best coursing in the East; and a third, excellent hunting in the West. Sir James this, promised to mount him; Sir John the other, to induct him into the mysteries of Hofwyl husbandry; while a squire of many acres, and many daughters, boasted of "the finest stock in the county, and the finest billiard-table out of Lon'on."

All this would have been amusing enough had there been any one at hand to share the jest; but Marytown was a fellow who laughed at no jokes but his own, and Hounslow, who had been a heavy loser on the St. Leger, was in no mood to laugh at even his own. Sir Henry sighed after the sprightly sympathy of his cousin. Frank would have drawn out these people: without having re-

course to the coarse raillery of the Devil-may-cares, Frank would have shown up the advances of the young ladies, and stimulated those of the old gentlemen. With Frank as his coadjutor, he should have broken through the *gêne* of the more formal country-houses, and enjoyed the jovial hilarity of the hospitable; but he was alone among all these people, — always alone, — always in need of the companionship of that other self, without which solitude is loneliness, and society solitude. Wife, mistress, friend, no matter which; but a man unable to exert his faculties, or fling himself for amusement into external excitements, *requires* the association of a more mercurial nature.

"You're a lucky dog, Jack!" observed Woodbridge to John Hartwell, at whose parsonage he settled himself for a week's hunting early in November. "Here you are, with your professional duties by way of occupation and settled in the best county in England."

"The best *hunting* county," amended John, whose hereditary affection for the rectory of Hursley rendered him indulgent towards Hampshire.

—"And with always some friend or other glad to come and take a bed here. You lead a monstrous pleasant life! Everybody likes you, and you like everybody; and no one bores you either with too much or too little civility. Heigho!"

"Will you change places?" demanded Hartwell, after indulging in a hearty laugh at the fantastic hypochondriacism of his former pupil. "You are tired of having nothing to do and everything to enjoy. A few months of bachelor fare, — burnt mutton-chops and fiery port, with two services of a Sunday, and parish business all the week round, would soon cheer you up."

Sir Henry shrugged his shoulders. "My mother makes Hursley so confoundedly disagreeable," said he, "that I prefer any other

place in England. At Hursley I am always bored to death."

"But so you were in London, where you saw little or nothing of Lady Mary; and you don't seem to have been much better amused in the North, eh?"

"No. I grew sick to death of London and should have been just as much disgusted with Scotland, had I remained long enough. I vow to Heaven I've never been happy since I left Oxford!"

"Because *there* you had something to do and were obliged to do it. Leisure was pleasant, because it was a relief from occupation.

"At Christchurch I never felt bored, never out of spirits. Grenfell's liveliness carried one so pleasantly through the day! He stood exactly in the light which makes companionship agreeable. Frank had an interest in my concerns, and a knowledge of my affairs which mere friendship never can attain. I dearly loved Frank Grenfell."

"Who did not?" cried Hartwell. "The most sunshiny fellow that ever warmed one's heart on a winter's day! But why in the past tense? Has any misunderstanding occurred between you?"

"God forbid! But time and place are against us. We shall never be again together as we were then. I have not even heard of him these two months. These political changes will perhaps be in his favour."

"If he have but an opening sufficient to encourage him to application," cried John Hartwell, filling Sir Henry's glass with the fiery port to which he had alluded, and stirring up a blazing fire, "Grenfell has first-rate talents, and, above all, the tact and adroitness of mind calculated to bring them into play. Frank's weapons will never rust in the sheath. He is cunning of fence, as well as strong of arms."

"The world is quite of your mind: I have heard him fifty times cited by indifferent peo-

ple as likely to make a distinguished figure," said Sir Henry, doing warm justice to his cousin's merits. "It was always my intention to bring him into parliament; and, now there is a prospect of its advancing his worldly interests, shall take the earliest opportunity. An Opposition member without fortune or standing is supposed to injure his professional prospects by coming forward too young."

"You will secure a valuable present to your party," replied Hartwell. "You, I fear, will never make much of a member; but I have hopes of Frank, now that his spirit is to be cheered by finding himself in the ascendant. I shall take upon myself immensely among my country neighbours when my two pupils are figuring in the next parliament. I won't answer for not shouting from the Strangers' Gallery among the cheers that follow Grenfell's maiden speech, like old Quin of King George, 'I taught the boy!' though God knows my teaching to

either of you was little enough, for it was only what you chose to learn!"

"You encouraged us to feel and act like gentlemen," replied Sir Henry kindly; "and that is a lesson not to be had for money. All the scholarship in the world would not render me a happier man."

"It might inspire you with the love of occupation. The man who finds pleasure in weaving straws is happier than he who finds pleasure in nothing; how much more the man who, by taking delight in books, unfolds for himself a thousand new sources of enjoyment. There! there is one of my old Christchurch lessons resuscitated for your advantage."

"I retort it upon yourself," said Woodbridge, looking round to the supply of bookshelves with which the bachelor parlour was so much less scantily supplied than with fishing-rods, hunting-whips, and foxes' brushes!

"My life is too active to admit of reading,"

cried Hartwell laughing. "I look upon study as one of the luxuries of the rich. With a parish here of five thousand souls, and half-a-dozen wealthy farmers who give me more trouble in my vestry than all my parishioners put together, what leisure have I for books?—Air and exercise, to keep body and soul together, constitute my recreation! If I live to progress to Hursley, where that best of curates, Drudgewell, leaves his rector a moment or two now and then to draw his breath, you will find me ambling over to the Park sometimes to borrow some old folio or quarto from the library, — provided always that Miss Grenfell (the only one of the family who ever enters it) can spare me one for my studies!"

"If it were not disrespectful and unkind to your father, my dear Hartwell, I should say, would that the time were come!" cried Woodbridge. "But the hale old Doctor has twenty years before him; and I often feel, with a cold shudder, that I shall be driven into matrimony

en attendant by want of companionship. My mother, you know, counts for worse than nothing; and Bessy Grenfell is worse than my mother."

"She is nevertheless a girl of excellent temper and sense."

"Yes, excellent; but it has been taught her as a bounden duty to make herself disagreeable to me. Besides, I am not bookish enough for the young lady; it is not worth her while to talk to such an uncultivated boor. After all, of what use is so much reading to a woman, when Julia Loveden, who owns herself a dunce, is twice as pleasant a companion?"

"Miss Loveden! Why, when I was last in Hampshire, you were always exclaiming against her," cried Hartwell.

"Who would not exclaim against a woman whose merits were drummed into his ears, morning, noon, and night, by Lady Mary Woodbridge?"

"You thought her so forward, so flippant."

"A raw schoolboy, — what should I know then of the world! Two years ago, I considered her forward, by comparison with Bessy Grenfell's icy reserve. I have now seen more of society; and her easy manners are the very thing to thaw the coldness of a formal country circle. In the last three months I have been staying in thirty different houses, but none to compare with Raynham Lodge!"

"Because Raynham Lodge is frequented by the first men of the day."

"I have been there but once with their ministerial parties, and never saw the place so little agreeable. No! it is pleasant when one drops in to luncheon, — it is pleasant when one dines there *en famille*, — it is pleasant when" —

"This is quite a new song," cried Hartwell in amazement. "How long have you been in love with Julia Loveden?"

"Ever since my mother left off plaguing me about her. The London season showed me

nothing handsomer, my country visits nothing more agreeable. I like all her people, — not the Raynhams exactly, who are time-serving and heartless, — but old Loveden and his daughters. Lady Rowe and Mrs. Swinburn are charming women, — excellent wives, — excellent mothers!"

"In short, if you could but get her family and your own to forbid the banns, the fair Julia would become Lady Woodbridge."

"Perhaps not, even if I asked her!" replied Sir Henry with a proud smile. "Miss Grenfell was civil enough to give me to understand that Miss Loveden preferred her brother!"

"Poor girl!"

"Why, poor girl? You should say, 'poor Woodbridge!'" continued Sir Henry in the same self-complacent tone.

"I say 'poor girl,' because I know Frank's affections to be engaged."

"You are in his confidence, then?" demanded Sir Henry, piqued and colouring.

"No further than that, when I joked with him in town about that Lady something-or-other Russell, on whom he wasted so much time, he told me that in the first place she was a woman of irreproachable conduct; and that, in the second, he had an attachment."

"He did not inform you to whom?"

"I did not press the question. Frank merely gave me to understand that it was a true love, of which the course was not likely to run smooth."

"He gave you even no idea of the nature of the obstacles?"

"Their name was Legion," he said; "want of fortune and incompatibilities of various sorts and kinds. I did not urge him. There is nothing so unfair as forcing a man to betray his secrets, who you know cannot refuse you his confidence."

"But if the object of his passion were Julia Loveden herself?"

"In that case, I should really say, 'poor

Woodbridge !' Julia Loveden ?—impossible ! I remember rallying Frank, before he left Oxford, about a flirtation I had noticed between them at Hursley, and a dried flower I once found in his pocket Horace."

"And he answered"—

"That I must be aware of Lady Mary's projects; that I had no right to suspect him of treachery towards persons to whom he had such heavy obligations."

"Obligations !" cried Sir Henry peevishly.

"You may remember that at that time he was perpetually citing Miss Loveden's merits to you."

"Perhaps the better to disgust me."

"I have heard him tell you that Miss Loveden was exactly suited to you as a wife."

"There may have been more treachery in that than even in trying to cut me out," cried Woodbridge with bitterness.

"Come, come ! you have no right, even in jest, even in jealousy, to attribute vileness to

Grenfell's generous nature. And for what? Because I hint to you that he is in love; and because you have made up your mind that there is no girl in the world to be fallen in love with but Julia Loveden, on whom, by the way, you have been heaping disdains for the last three years without rhyme or reason; whom, the moment you deign to turn your smiles upon her, no other man must dare admire!"

"I would rather," cried Sir Henry, starting up, and with hurried footsteps pacing the room, —"I would rather drone away my life in my present senseless unmeaning apathy, than discover that Frank had played me false. No one can guess how dear Frank Grenfell has been to me."

"I can guess and honour the feeling!" replied Hartwell with growing seriousness. "But is that a reason that Frank is to be dear to no one else, and no one else to him?"

"No brother was ever more cordial than I to Grenfell!" persisted Woodbridge with growing agitation.

"My dear fellow, you would not surely boast of feelings as brotherly, which instigate such profound selfishness?" cried Hartwell. "Your notion of your rights and Frank's reminds me of Mazarin's treatment of Anne of Austria's twin sons; one of whom he condemned to pass through life a prisoner in an iron mask, in order that the other might enjoy unrivalled possession of the throne!"

"I am sorry to make myself your laughing-stock," replied Sir Henry Woodbridge angrily; "but mark my words, that if your surmise prove just, there will be an end to all friendship between Frank and myself! Either brothers and dearer than ever, or enemies for life!"

CHAPTER XIV.

The treasures of the deep are not so precious
As the concealed comforts of a man
Lock'd up in woman's love! SHAKSPEARE.

HAPPY lovers are indulgent people, and a manœuvrer, in the prosperity of her plans, is seldom very acrimonious; or Julia, Frank, and Lady Raynham would have scarcely found patience for the hot and cold fits of Lady Mary Woodbridge's disordered temper during the two days she spent at Raynham Lodge. Divers times did the fair Julia sing and say the savageness out of her mind; but the paroxysm as often returned, when her disappointment broke forth beyond control.

"I do think," she would ejaculate, when

some accidental allusion brought before her mind her son, now lost for ever in the ignominious obscurities of baronetism,—"I *do* think it is the hardest thing on earth, that my poor boy, with his fine fortune and situation in life, should find a match unexceptionably suited to him in every respect, and have it snatched from his hands by a person who pretends to study his cousin's happiness and convenience beyond his own."

To turn a deaf ear to her outbursts of ungraciousness was impossible, for she was one of the quarrelsome people who insist upon being answered; who, after thwarting a servant past all patience, demand, "What is that, pray, you are muttering?" and then dismiss him for giving an impertinent answer!

At the close of her two days' stay, it was impossible to propose a prolongation of the visit. Everybody's patience was tired out; and though Frank Grenfell's sojourn at the Lodge was to be extended till Lord Rayn-

ham's return from town, it was admitted by all parties that he and Bessy must forego the happiness of being together. Lady Raynham, who was now all courtesy to her nephew-in-law's sister, would have fain begged Lady Mary to leave her for a few days with her young friends. But Bessy's good sense prevailed: her aunt must not be alone; her aunt would only be irritated by the proposal: they had best return to Hursley as soon as possible, and together.

It was a sad thing to Julia and Frank to see her depart with the tiresome old woman, whose vengeance of tongue would, they knew, be wreaked upon her during their long drive, and perhaps for a week afterwards. But they comforted themselves with a mutual assurance that the dear girl's dependency was almost at an end; while Lady Raynham could not help remarking, as the dowager's chariot rolled from the door, "After all, I don't see why we should consider her an object of commi-

seration. If Miss Grenfell had been so very miserably situated with Lady Mary, she would not have refused Lord Warkworth."

Meanwhile the London letter-bag had brought letters both to Frank and Lady Raynham, calculated to promote a good understanding among the trio at the Lodge. Lord Raynham wrote to his wife that the Regency Bill was safe, and the condition of his Majesty past hope: that the commotion of the political world was excessive, — the only person who made no demonstrations being his Royal Highness the Prince: the great bean-stalk of Toryism was about to be cut off, root and branch!

The letter despatched to Frank by his friend Sheridan, meanwhile, contained an earnest entreaty that he would hasten back to town. "You ought to be here," he wrote. "I should like yours to be one of the first faces gilded by the rays of the rising sun. Don't write me word that you have married a wife, and

therefore you cannot come. Wives and chil dren are the mainstays of patriotism. Woul you have me believe that *amor patriæ* consis in affection for the fifty-two shires of the kir dom? — in delight at seeing the Union J triumphant over all other Jacks?—or in a p sant sense of ear-tickling when the 'nati anthem' is chorused by our fellow-English more or less out of tune? — No such t We love the Constitution because it s liberty and well-being to our fellow-su while the well-being of our fellow-s secures the happiness and tranquillity who are dearest to us. Match me th of logic if you can, frankest of Franks in the bright eyes of a certain fair whose feet a veteran rhymester is b throw himself. No loitering in chi ners at present, my dear boy; but amongst us!"

"I can't understand it all," obs

to whom her lover's letters were one and all confided.

" ' Qui de nous donc est le dupe,
Tout le monde est du secret ?'

" runs Don Basile's song; which, if I could turn it prettily, I would fain parody into — 'Who is to lose his place?' Everybody seems to triumph in the Regency. My uncle's exultation — for exult he certainly does, or my aunt would not be in such golden good-humour,—is altogether inexplicable. I am never pleased with advantages that I cannot appreciate on honest principles. *Je m'y perds!* And, the moment you come to an understanding with him, I entreat you to go back to town. Examine all these matters with a cool and careful eye; and satisfy yourself, undeceived by the flatteries of Sheridan or the generalities of Lord Raynham, that our prospects are really such as you could wish."

Frank's answer was that of a man in love,

permitted to sun himself in the smiles of the object of his passion. He had no ambitions, no worldly aspirings. His Julia was all in all, Raynham Lodge (albeit in November) an Eden upon earth, and himself the most fortunate and content of sinful mortals.

Meanwhile poor Bessy was exercising that admirable command of temper, perfected by her experience at Hursley Park; nor was it till she had fulfilled her habitual duties of reading aloud the letters and notes that had arrived during their absence, and inditing, under Lady Mary's dictation, foolish replies, giving orders to the housekeeper and receiving intelligence from the head-gardener, preparing Lady Mary's knitting and setting her spectacles within her reach, that she ventured to retire to her own room for the indulgence of her headache and her reflections.

During their drive home, she had heard the Lovedens and Raynhams abused in every form of invective. They were base, they were

false, they were heartless, they were ungrateful! There was nothing that her own mild regrets could add to the charges summoned up against them. But, setting aside these enormities as giants conjured up by the spells of her bombastic aunt, she could obtain no happier view of all that had occurred, and its consequences, than that Frank was about to launch irretrievably on the road to ruin, and that he had obtained, as companion of the exploit, a most lovely and fascinating wife. Her own interests she placed wholly out of sight; they were not, in fact, apt to obstruct her views; and among the tears that fell from her eyes while reflecting upon her involuntary share in promoting the rash engagement of her beloved Frank, not one had its origin in the gloomy prospects of Bessy Grenfell!

But the high-spirited, active-minded girl was above giving way to despondency. She arose and bestirred herself; her favourite books and occupations were again around her.

She would not suffer herself to dwell upon evils, perhaps never to be realized. The danger, at all events, was not imminent.

There was one mischief, however, of an immediate nature, for which Bessy was wholly unprepared. Sir Henry Woodbridge, who had chosen to absent himself from Hursley till his absence came to be scarcely noted, had set off home upon the strength of his conversation with John Hartwell, and was literally approaching the Park!

The more vehemently Hartwell argued that there was no motive for fixing upon Miss Loveden as the object of Frank Grenfell's passion, the more did Sir Henry become convinced that he was supplanted. After a sleepless worrying night, in which, admonished by his uneasiness, he determined that, should his fears prove groundless, he would lose no further time in appropriating to himself a treasure, the mere supposition of losing which could thus stir up his blood,—he signified to Jack

his intention of instant departure; and while the post-horses were being ordered, and the chaise-seats packed, he stood receiving at the same time from his Mentor serious assurances that he could not do better than propose to Miss Loveden out of hand, and, throwing his hyppishness to the dogs, marry and settle at Hursley Park,—and instructions respecting the weaning of a pointer puppy, which Sir Henry was to transfer from the Parsonage kitchen to his own aristocratic kennel.

"For my part," cried Hartwell, "I always thought Miss Loveden the handsomest girl in Hampshire. Mrs. Swinburn used to look better on horseback, but Mrs. Swinburn wants eyebrows; and as to Lady Rowe, though a head and shoulders taller than her sister, Julia has twice as much dignity.—You will give her a hot mess of bread and milk before bed-time; because though I clearly hold, that, from the moment of weaning, a pup should begin as it is to end, yet as Donna's have been made a

sort of pet by the maids, the poor thing might fret if turned loose at once among strange dogs."

"Yes, certainly: William will see her properly attended to," cried Sir Henry impatiently. "It is not so much Julia's beauty that has overcome my prejudices; though I suppose no man in the universe can be insensible to the charm of such a face and figure. But I want a companion, Jack; I want a friend. I like her frank outspoken nature. I like her high spirit. I feel that I shall be able to rely upon her to think and act for me."

"I hope not! If once your idleneship gives way to that notion, there's an end of you!" cried Hartwell. "You'll be at Hursley by dinner to-morrow: I don't think you'll have rain."

"I can't understand a man not resigning himself heart and soul into the hands of any woman he esteems sufficiently to make her his companion for life," resumed the Baronet, following his own train of reflections. "I con-

sider that unlimited confidence and trust is due to a wife."

"At all events, a slip of oil-cloth is easily tied over the basket to keep out the wet if you mean her to go in the boot!" cried Jack, who had been examining through the study-window the labour of Sir Henry's footman in packing his carriage, without hearing a word of his discourse. "Puppies are often stunted by being let to lie in damp straw."

On his journey homewards, however, Woodbridge found ample leisure to commune with himself touching his purposes, undisturbed by solicitude for Donna's puppy; and the result was, that he began to tax himself with being an ass for having so long delayed his happiness. To have remained insensible to the attractions of the most charming girl in England, merely because it suited her family and his own to see them united, was a pitch of folly that had been disgraceful even to a Lord Warkworth! Never should he have forgiven himself had

some more adventurous man, profiting by his hesitation, stepped in to deprive him of the hand of the beautiful Julia.

He dwelt upon every feature of her face, —every turn of her countenance; — the deep-blue laughing eyes, — the even and polished brows, — the "rings of chestnut hair," — the delicately oval face,—the smile lighting it up as if by enchantment. He thought of the tapering waist,—the graceful hand,—the symmetry of a form which sculptors might have delighted to model; and began to array them in the splendid enhancements of opulence. He saw diamonds flashing amid the chestnut hair, and the graceful figure dignified by its train of matron velvet. Jewels blazed upon the rounded arm, the taper finger, the trimly waist; while admiring crowds hailed the beauteous vision as Lady Woodbridge of Hursley Park.

His heart beat quicker at the sport of his own fancy; but its movements were still more

hurried when he brought home the fair creation of his fancy to preside over his household home. He saw her riding with him in the Hursley woods, and shrubby lanes and coppices; wandering with him by moonlight through the park, disputing with him playfully a game at chess or billiards, caressing his favourite dogs, (even the puppy now yelping in Jack Hartwell's basket,) visiting with him the kennel, the stable, the pheasantry, the farm; and, above all, amusing the long winter evenings with pleasant chat, and rendering "well-ordered home" his best delight and comfort.

Lady Mary had promised, in the event of his accomplishing her favourite scheme, to retire at once from Hursley Park to Bath; and his regard for Julia's tranquillity determined him to accept the proposal. He did not however wish to make his mother an exile from his roof. The oftener she returned as a guest the better; not only for the sake of decency and gratitude, but on account of the satisfac-

tion experienced by his future wife in his cousin's society. Bessy was just the companion whom a wise man would desire for his wife; prudent, feminine, gentle, honourable. Even Julia's blameless but almost flighty gaiety of heart might be amended by the lessons of wisdom imparted by Miss Grenfell Bessy's unpretending nature and highly cultivated mind rendered her at once the safest and most improving of associates for a woman of her own age. He had perfect reliance upon Bessy!

Such were the chimeras evoked by Woodbridge to cheer and amuse his journey. By degrees he excited his own spirits to the highest pitch. He painted himself the happiest of husbands and fathers, and the most envied of men. Some day or other he should enjoy a hearty laugh with his friend, Frank, over the absurd fears that for a moment had disturbed his imagination; and Grenfell, who had so often in former times seconded the re-

commendations of Lady Mary, would in his turn enjoy the jest; for, alas! there was little likelihood that *he* would ever become a marrying man! The state of his fortunes forbad it,—the volatility of his nature forbad it. While Sir Henry was lapped in the Elysium of domestic comfort, Frank, poor fellow! would still be fretting away his days and nights at the feet of some Lady Mary Russell, or in committees of the House of Commons!

For a single moment, indeed, there glanced into his mind a recollection of the unceremonious manner in which he had overheard himself treated by Julia Loveden. But was it not very natural? Would any woman, pestered as she was by her family concerning him, have spoken otherwise? or would any other girl have felt less piqued by his defying and insolent indifference? Julia had spoken only to her confidante, only to one of his own nearest relations; probably in the intention

that her cutting remarks should be reported to him and stimulate his tardy gallantry. She had treated him with distinguished kindness afterwards, whenever towards the end of the season they met in London. From Frank Grenfell's partiality she had probably obtained a higher appreciation of his character; for her deportment was gracious, friendly, encouraging,—nay, almost deferential. There would be no great difficulty to ripen such feelings into love!

So self-deceptive was Sir Henry's plausible train of argument, and so completely had he worked himself up to enthusiasm, that on skirting, within seven miles of Hursley, the neat palings and well-kept shrubberies of the grounds of Raynham Lodge, he was half inclined to stop and try at once the event of his fortunes. It was only on reflecting that Julia might not perhaps be at that moment on a visit to her uncle, he thought better of it. To arrive for a morning visit to Lady Rayn-

ham with tired post-horses and in a travelling dress, with a pointer puppy yelping in the boot of his carriage, would certainly assume a most singular appearance. He would wait till the following day. Without communicating to Lady Mary a syllable of his intentions, he would ride over on the morrow; and, if Miss Loveden were absent, follow her to the Parsonage, and prefer his suit to her worthy old father, rather than to her less worthy uncle and aunt.

. Such was the state of his feelings, while the lightness of his heart reflected itself in smiles upon his flushed cheeks and in his sparkling eyes, as he neared the fine woods forming the prelude to the domain of Hursley. He had never felt so proud of it before. It was worthy to be made an offering to Julia; and Julia was worthy to be its liege lady. Few lovers, he thought, were fortunate enough to court the object of their affections to so fair and high an estate.

CHAPTER XV.

> By day and night, he wrongs me! — Every hour
> He flashes into some vile fault or other
> That sets us all at odds! — I 'll not endure it!
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

EVEN Dr. Johnson, so unmoved by the delectabilities of life, was fain to confess that it is a mighty pleasant thing to bowl along a good road in an easy chaise. But what were the roads and chaises of Johnson's time, compared with those of Sir Henry Woodbridge? or what the charm of the great lexicographer's ruminations, compared with those of a bridegroom expectant, — one of the spoiled children of Fortune, about to be overwhelmed under a new avalanche of roses?

Perfect, indeed, was the joy of the young traveller; and proportionably great the vexation with which he found his headlong speed suddenly interrupted, and the crooked nose of Sir Robert Crewe protruding in at the window.

"Ha! Woodbridge, my dear fellow! upon my soul and honour, I'm mighty glad to see you!" cackled the General. "I was saying last night to Lady Crewe, that I thought you could not be far off, with all these gay doings in the family. By the Lord Harry, my dear boy, I heartily wish you joy!"

"Thank you, thank you!" replied Woodbridge, extricating his hand from the gripe of his officious friend, and vaguely referring his congratulations to the event by which his own thoughts were engrossed.

"By your playing truant so long, I suppose you had famous sport in the North, eh?—Ugly stories about that mare of your friend Mr. Hounslow's at Doncaster. Upon my soul

and honour! I should think twice before I showed at Tattersall's with such a man on my arm."

"And I, three times."

"I trust they let you off cheap at Huntley Castle? By the Lord Harry! I felt quite uneasy, my dear fellow, when I heard you had been netted by such fishers of men as the Duchess."

"Thank you! I have not been making a greater fool of myself than I could help," replied Woodbridge drily; and he was about to give the signal to the postboys to drive on, when (as well as Donna junior's impatient yelpings enabled him to hear) the General retorted with—

"Great inquiries after you the other day at Oak Hill. Upon my soul and honour, sir! those girls will be quite amazed to hear of your coming back alone. Report led us to expect that we were to find a fair lady in the corner of the carriage!"

"Don't you hear her in the boot?" cried Woodbridge, almost out of patience.

"Young Danston wrote word that a certain daughter of a certain Lady Clowance—"

"Young Danston is a blockhead. True to Hampshire, I prefer looking for a wife nearer home."

"By the Lord Harry, the Beckford girls shall learn that piece of news before to-morrow night!" muttered Crewe;—adding aloud, "Ay, ay! — Lancashire witches and Hampshire angels!—Why, you see, even your cousin Frank, after playing the fine gentleman so grandly in town, has been forced to come back to Hursley for a wife!"

"Frank Grenfell?" exclaimed Sir Henry in some surprise.

"And as pretty a couple they will make as one could wish to see. Upon my soul and honour! I never have patience to see our pretty friend Lady Rowe hanging to the arm of Sir William, or the Dean hobbling in with that

sweet creature our friend Mrs. Swinburn. But, by the Lord Harry! Julia and Frank will be Venus and Adonis by comparison."

"Yes, if they were ever likely to come together," observed Woodbridge with a sneer.

"Why, is the match off?" cried Sir Robert hastily.

"I never heard that it was on," said Sir Henry.

"Didn't you indeed! Then, by the Lord Harry, sir! I'm glad to be the first to tell you the news. Everything's settled! Lord Raynham has given his consent, — Lady Mary has given her consent,—the young lady has given her consent; and every soul in the neighbourhood is delighted!"

Sir Henry was struck dumb.

"And though you did not choose to marry her yourself," added Sir Robert, "upon my soul and honour! my dear fellow, you must receive her graciously as a cousin."

Sir Henry now gave a signal to proceed, to

the postboys, with so much vivacity that Sir Robert had scarcely time to withdraw the talons by which the lining of the chariot was clutched to facilitate his colloquy, before the horses were in a gallop. Within a few miles of his own princely estate, a young gentleman of fortune is sure to go a pretty smart pace; and Sir Robert was left far behind on the crown of the causeway, vibrating on his pony to recover his equilibrium in the saddle, and steady only in his purpose of trotting on to Raynham Lodge to bruit abroad intelligence of the scared and "daized" air with which Sir Henry Woodbridge had received his congratulations upon the marriage of Miss Loveden and Mr. Grenfell.

It would be difficult to describe the war of contending emotions that deprived the young Baronet of speech and almost of judgment as he entered his lodge-gates. He alighted at his own hall-door without the slightest cognizance of the congees bestowed upon him by his do-

mestics; not a word, not a nod, not a smile, to the best-powdered footmen and best-brushed butlers in Hampshire, after six months' absence from home, and three from their devoted services. The steward's room was indignant; the servants' hall had a great mind to give warning. But for the excellence of the Hursley ale and the abundance of the Hursley cheer, even the grooms who burst from the stable-yard to make their obeisance to their young master would have revolted. Sir Henry's brows were black with care, and his splashing-board yellow with mud. The very helpers began to grumble. "Master was plaguily out of humour, and the chariot plaguily out of order! They should like to know what was come to 'em both!"

Retired in her own chamber, which overlooked a flower-garden apart from either entrance, Bessy Grenfell had remained undisturbed by the stir occasioned by her cousin's arrival. No one came to apprise her. Her thoughts were

otherwise engrossed; and it was not till the first dinner-bell had rung that she issued from her room, and, meeting on the landing-place a footman bearing a dressing-case in a Russia cover, inquired whether any one was arrived. The answer induced her to retreat again to her dressing-room rather than proceed; not, as certain young ladies may surmise, to adjust her curls with a better grace, or change the simple dress in which she was about to sit down to dinner with Lady Mary, but to collect her thoughts, and determine on the course to be pursued.

She dreaded the encounter. Sir Henry had doubtless still to be apprised that he had lost all chance of Miss Loveden's hand; and what would be the result?—With the ready tact of her sex in such matters, Bessy had seen through his views towards Julia. It was clear to her that his original coolness was occasioned solely by his mother's tormenting officiousness; and that from the period of Lady Mary's compara-

tive abandonment of the scheme, he had been greatly struck by the extent of Miss Loveden's London popularity. No longer the mere country belle, he saw her the favourite of fashion, the chosen associate of the first people in the kingdom, — mingling gaily and gracefully in the conversation of men of European renown. Aware of her cousin's foible of submitting his tastes and opinions to the guidance of others, it did not surprise Bessy that the more he saw Lord Raynham's niece admired, the more he admired her: and though the hint she had inadvertently thrown out of Julia's preference of her brother should have served as warning to Sir Henry, (and his departure for the North justified her hope that it had checked his passion in the bud,) it was impossible to guess what might be the effect of learning her engagement to another.

Miss Grenfell trembled. Too high-minded for pusillanimity, she was not apt to be thus affected. She could confront the raging of

Lady Mary, and had been indifferent to the hauteur of Lady Raynham; but towards Sir Henry Woodbridge she felt differently. Sir Henry was her brother's benefactor; Sir Henry was a person in whose generosity of nature she had long entertained perfect confidence. She trembled lest her regard for him should be diminished by some impulse of vulgar resentment. She feared that he might have been somewhat unfairly dealt with, and dreaded lest he should deal unfairly in return. Bessy could have found it in her heart to weep for terror, lest the kinsman whom she had often found dull, cold, sullen, ungracious, but never harsh or unjust, should be driven to some act of revenge!

At length, after much cogitation and much anxiety, she took courage and went down to dinner. Her hand paused uneasily on the handle of the drawing-room door, — colder with nervousness than the massive crystal of which it was composed. She took breath.

She entered with her usual calm, dignified demeanour.

Sir Henry was standing where English gentlemen usually stand, on the hearth-rug, with his back towards the fire. On such occasions, it was his wont to advance towards her with an extended hand, though never with the brotherly and sisterly cordiality which might be expected to subsist between them. But now, he remained motionless. His bow was distant and formal, — a mere tribute of courtesy to a woman, not a token of kindness to a cousin and inmate. Bessy's heart swelled, but she had sufficient self-command to repress her rising tears, and only trusted that Lady Mary might have tact enough to refrain in her presence from any allusion to the origin of his discontent.

Dinner was speedily served. Miss Grenfell hazarded a few inquiries concerning his journey, which were answered with a constrained civility worse than silence. She inquired

kindly after Hartwell; a neutral subject, she thought, that could provoke no reflections painful to either. But, unfortunately, the allusion brought instantly to Sir Henry's mind the topic which had been last agitated between him and his friend; and Hartwell's counsels, his own vaunts, and a thousand minor considerations, of which Julia Loveden was the heroine, recurred to his recollection. Bessy Grenfell noticed the eloquent blood rush to his cheek, to his brow; then leave it pale again. She feared, she *almost* feared that she saw unwonted moisture glisten in his eyes. It was impossible to guess by what chain of associations she had occasioned this emotion; but she could not doubt that it remotely originated in something relating to Frank and Julia. This was worst of all. If Sir Henry's feelings were affected, Frank was criminal indeed. Was there no other woman on earth for him to snatch to his bosom, but the one dear to his kind cousin—his confiding cousin—his gene-

rous, admiring, loving cousin?—Bessy Grenfell was touched to the quick by the mere idea of what Sir Henry might be about to suffer; but the slightest conjecture of the nature of her own quick and searching sympathy never entered her mind.

Meanwhile, it was clear that Sir Henry had interdicted all allusion to Frank in her presence; for, whenever Lady Mary approached within many degrees of Raynham Lodge, a glance from him towards his mother put a period to her eloquence. Whatever might be his indignation, he did not wish to insult Bessy by speaking harshly of her brother. Once only a slight reference to his wrongs was extorted from his own lips, by Lady Mary's abrupt and indelicate allusion to Miss Grenfell's renewed rejection of Lord Warkworth.

"Would you believe it, my dear Harry?" cried she; "Bessy has been fool enough again to refuse Lord Teviot's only son! Such in-

terest for her brother, such a connection for herself; such a gratification to all of us! You have really no notion how deeply poor Lord Teviot feels the disappointment."

"Disappointment!" reiterated Sir Henry. "Of what have either the Earl or his son a right to complain? Miss Grenfell has conducted herself towards them from the first with perfect candour! Miss Grenfell, at least, has deceived no one, — humiliated no one, — injured no one. *She* has nothing of which to accuse herself."

This exoneration was no comfort to Bessy, though it brought feverish blushes to her cheeks. It was not of herself she wanted to hear a vindication: it was her brother whom she wished to hear excused and forgiven. She was so accustomed to hear praises of Frank from her cousin! It seemed so hard to be in momentary apprehension of accusation and reprobation.

Throughout dinner-time did these uneasy

sensations prevail. She scarcely dared direct her eyes towards Sir Henry's seat; she no longer hazarded the smallest remark; and her depression of spirits probably appealed forcibly to his indulgence; for on the dessert being placed on table he invited her to take wine, and, though there was nothing beyond courtesy in the action, Bessy fancied she could trace a sort of relenting in the look and tone by which it was expressed.

Already she began to breathe more freely, when an unusual bustle in the vestibule startled her quick ear. The door was thrown open,—the butler announced "Mr. Grenfell;" —and Frank, booted and great-coated, and bringing with him the freshness of a frosty November night, entered the room and advanced cheerfully towards the table!

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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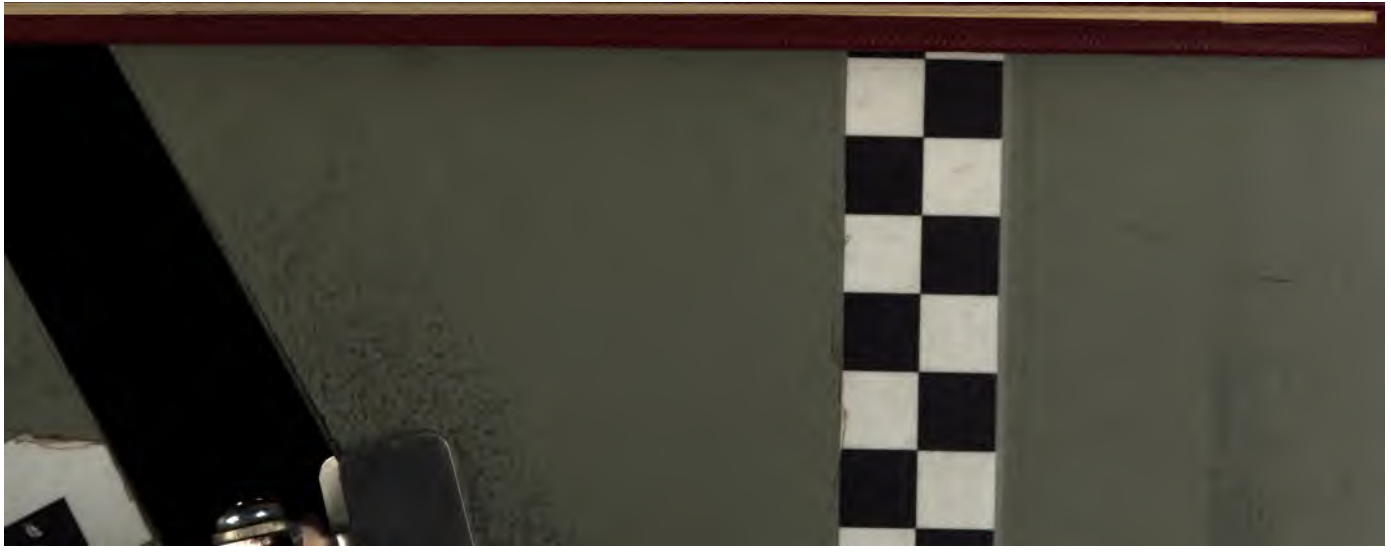
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